THE PRACTICE OF SOUL-LEADING

BY MEANS OF RHETORIC AND MYTH

IN PLATO'S *PHAEDRUS*

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ABSTRACT

THE PRACTICE OF SOUL-LEADING BY MEANS OF RHETORIC AND MYTH IN PLATO'S *PHAEDRUS*

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This study aims at explaining the fundamental use or the function of mythic imagery that take place within the Phaedrus dialogue by Plato. The Platonic dialogues have utilized myths and poetic language in many instances, yet Phaedrus constitutes a rather strange case, since the mythic imagery is placed within a section that seemingly has no ties with the rest of the dialogue. The curious case of Phaedrus is that the text can be said to have been divided into two distinct parts. In each part, the theme and the textual structure display certain substantial differences. As it has been observed throughout many generations of scholars, the first half of the dialogue is a series of discussions on the nature of love. The mythic imagery occupies a substantial place within the context of those accounts of love. The second half of the dialogue, however, is almost exclusively reserved for the art of rhetoric. As this study demonstrates there have been numerous attempts at uniting these two halves of the dialogue. This thesis attempts to give another account for the case of a unified dialogue, and argues that the element that bridges the two halves of the dialogue is the notion of "soul-leading".

Keywords: Plato, myth, rhetoric, Eros, unity.

ÖZ

PLATON'UN *PHAİDROS*'UNDA RETORİK VE MİT YOLUYLA RUHA REHBERLİK PRATİĞİ

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Bu çalışma Platon'un Phaidros diyaloğunda yer alan mitik imgelerin temel itibariyle nasıl bir işlev ya da kullanım görmüş olabileceğine dair bir açıklama getirmeyi hedeflemektedir. Platonik diyalogların mitik imgelere birçok sefer yer vermiş olduğu bilinmektedir, bununla birlikte Phaidros ilginç bir vaka teşkil etmektedir. Zira, mitik imge diyaloğun geri kalanıyla görünürde bir bağ taşımayan bir bölüm içine yerleştirilmiştir. Phaidros'un ilgi çekici tarafı metnin iki ayrı parçaya bölünmüş gibi görünmesinden ileri gelmektedir. Her bir kısım tematik ve yapısal anlamda bir diğerinden dikkate değer bir şekilde farklılıklar göstermektedir. Nesiller boyunca birçok okurun da gözlemlediği üzere, diyaloğun ilk yarısında aşkın doğası hakkında yürütülen bir dizi tartışma yer almaktadır. Mitik imgeler aşk hakkında yapılan bu tartışmalar bağlamında metinde yer bulmaktadır. Diyaloğun ikinci yarısı ise neredeyse tamamen retorik sanatıyla ilgili tartışmalara ayrılmıştır. Bu çalışmanın ortaya koyduğu üzere diyaloğun bu iki yarısı arasında bir bütünlük bulmak üzere birçok girişimde bulunulmuştur. Bu tez diyaloğun bir bütünlük taşıdığını savunmak adına, diyaloğun iki yarısını bir araya getiren öğenin "ruh rehberliği" fikri olduğunu iddia etmektedir. Tezin temel iddiası şudur ki, diyaloğun ikinci yarısı bir retorikçinin karşısındaki kişiyi

felsefe yoluna girmek konusunda ikna etmek için sahip olması gereken kimi becerileri sıralamaktayken, diyaloğun ilk yarısı bu becerilerin uygulamadaki karşılığını örneklemektedir.

Anahtar sözcükler: Platon, mit, retorik, Eros, birlik.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Phaedrus is a peculiar dialogue.[1] Within its heart lies an anomaly that has confused many scholars throughout years, inspiring them to come up with suggestions to explain its presence. The anomaly in question is the disunity in *Phaedrus*. The people who read the dialogue are often surprised to see that there are two distinct subplots that are at work within *Phaedrus*. One elaborates on *Eros* and the nature of love, whereas the other is mostly concerned with the art of rhetoric. On top of that, there seems to be no explicit connection that has been made between the aforementioned parts of the dialogue. When the discussion on *Eros* ends, the discussion on rhetoric begins immediately without not so much of an intermission that could perhaps warn the reader how these two sections might be related. Instead, the dialogue simply switches from one theme to another. Quite naturally, that state of affairs have left many readers of the dialogue perplexed. In response, a number of explanations have been proposed as to how the two "halves" of *Phaedrus* could be united. In this thesis my objective is to devise a suggestion that could hopefully account for the disunity within the dialogue. My proposal is that what unites the dialogue is the theme of "soul-leading" practiced by means of rhetoric and myth. I would like to argue that the elements of rhetorical argumentation and mythic narration could be understood as the foundation that the dialogue is built upon, and they could be the key in developing an argument that could account for the disunity.

In order to argue in favor of the unity within *Phaedrus*, one has to be informed on what the dialogue is about. Granted, *Phaedrus* is about many things: there are a number of themes that are brought together within the text. Regrettably, any attempt that aims at

[1] All citations from *Phaedrus* will follow Stephen Scully's translation, unless stated otherwise. The direct quotations from both *Phaedrus* and *Gorgias* follow the *Stephanus edition*, which is the standart procedure in the study of the Platonic texts.

deciphering all the intricate interactions between those numerous themes and subplots is beyond the limits of my skills, as well as being outside the agenda of this thesis. Therefore in the first chapter of this text, the reader will be provided with an overview of the dialogue. The parts and elements that are included within this chapter are decided with respect to their relevance to our discussion. The chapter begins with a breakdown of the first half of the dialogue. We can make out three distinct discussions within this portion of *Phaedrus*. They are three separate speeches on the notion of love. The first speech belongs to a rhetorician named Lysias, and it is a speech advising Phaedrus to grant sexual (or other) favors to a non-lover instead of a lover. The next speech that follows that is by Socrates, and it follows a similar route: love could be a harmful thing, and Phaedrus might be advised to stay away from romantic interests. The third speech has a couple of significant qualities about it: Firstly, it reverts the arguments previously made on love, and hails Eros as a blessing. The second significant feature of this speech is that unlike the other speeches, it employs a rather rich and colorful mythic narrative to account for the nature of love. After that, the chapter directs its attention to the second half of the dialogue. The argument here is that the element of skillful practice of soul-leading is discussed and developed in certain parts of this section. Therefore, we should take a closer look on those discussions. Once the overview of the dialogue comes to a conclusion, we transition into the next chapter where we will elaborate on a number of attempts to unite *Phaedrus*.

The second chapter contains the summaries and the observations of some of the most well-articulated attempts at uniting the two halves of *Phaedrus* throughout the years. The first section within the chapter discusses the reason behind the readers' enthusiasm for trying to decide on a uniting element for the dialogue. Looking for evidences within the text, we will argue that certain expressions and arguments in the dialogue seem to encourage us to find some sort of unity, or an organizational coherence within *Phaedrus*. It is only natural that not everyone is in agreement on that; there is a certain argument that the problem of unity is a "non-problem". Heath is one of the scholars that share this point of view. The claim here is that what most people understand by "unity" is actually thematic coherence. However, Heath argues that this is a rather

contemporary concern in literature. He claims that for the contemporaries of Plato, the multitude of themes in a piece of literature did not represent a problem. Following that we come to the next section where unity is investigated with respect to a primary theme. The argument here is that there must be a primary theme within the dialogue around which all the rest of themes revolve and function. There are two major contenders for this position: Rhetoric and *Eros*. Each viewpoint has its observations that the arguments are based on, yet it will be proven to be rather difficult to decide which theme overcomes the other. After that, we come to the third approach in which the unity is argued to be found in certain formal elements such as the dramatic form of the dialogue. The argument can be summarized as follows: *Phaedrus* constitute a unified text as long as we take the notion of unity as such dramatic elements like coherence of plot and persistence of characters involved etc. Finally, we come to the strategic approach in which it is suggested that the impression of disunity might be indicative of some motive on the author's part. This is where the main argument of the thesis will be articulated to a degree. The next chapter is where I will attempt to elaborate with detail on main the argument of the thesis.

In the third and final chapter of the thesis my objectives will be to establish the elements that could be argued to unity the dialogue. The main idea here is that the skillful practice of soul-leading (persuasion) through the use of rhetoric and mythic imagery is the uniting element of Phaedrus. The manner in which this takes place can be summarized as follows: The first half of the dialogue is where we find certain examples of persuasion by means of rhetoric and mythic narratives. The second half is where a number of advisory guidelines that could detail the skills that might be utilized for the skillful practice of persuasion, so that we could investigate to what degree those three speeches have been successful. This argument will be investigated in two parts. In the first section, the second half of the dialogue will be at the center of our attention. The aforementioned skills that are arguably demonstrated by Socrates will be elaborated on detail. The first one is that a budding rhetorician should know the truth about the subject matter of his/her speech. The second one is that the rhetorician should have the capacity to recognize what kind of soul his/her interlocutor might possess. Thirdly, the young rhetorician should pay close attention to the

organization of the speech, and make sure that it displays some degree of liveliness. After that, the first couple of speeches composed by Lysias and Socrates are re-evaluated with respect to those advisory guidelines. The resulting claim that will be proposed here is that those speeches have failed to be samples of skillfully practiced soul-leading, because they do not seem to adhere to the advice given by Socrates in the second half of Phaedrus. In the second section of this chapter we are presented with the palinode: it will be argued that the palinode can be considered as a successful and skillfully made piece of persuasive speech in comparison to the previous speeches. The discussion that follows will try to elaborate on the reasons why that could be the case. First of all, the palinode seems to reflect Socrates' skill in assessing the true personality of his interlocutor Phaedrus. Secondly, the philosopher seems to have some grasp on the truth of Eros he has been talking about, although that bit of truth is attempted to be articulated within a mythic narrative which is not the most suitable medium for the communication of the entire truth of the matter. Finally, the chapter will come to an end with a conclusive remark that recapitulates the discussions that have taken place so far. Let us start our discussions with an overview of Phaedrus in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 2

AN OVERVIEW OF *PHAEDRUS*

Phaedrus has always been a rather confusing Platonic dialogue amongst its peers. There might have been complicated dialogues, or perhaps obscure ones with respect to their content. Yet, *Phaedrus* seems to attract a particular kind of attention because of its one significant feature. It is a dialogue without a unity. The dialogue seems to be divided into two seemingly unrelated subplots. One part of it takes *Eros* and the nature of love as its subject matter, whereas the other part is presented as a detailed discussion on rhetoric. This disparity between the subplots of the dialogue has been the topic of many discussions over the years. Indeed, there have been numerous attempts to suggest a theme or a common element that could potentially mean unity for the dialogue. The disunity gets only more complicated when we take a detailed look at the first part. It starts off with a rather run-of-the-mill speech by Lysias the orator, which is almost immediately followed by another speech by Socrates. Yet, what follows from that point on has confused many readers of Plato: those rhetorical speeches that have been deemed badly-made are superseded by a mythical narrative on the same subject matter. Therefore, there is the confusion that there seem to be two separate subject matters within the dialogue: rhetoric and love. There is also the confusion as to what purpose that the myth which stands right in the middle of the dialogue might serve. As we will discuss in the second chapter, many scholars have expressed their ideas on how to unite the two halves of the text. Some suggest that rhetoric is the primary theme, whereas some argued that *Eros* is in fact the subject matter the whole text revolves around. Some has found formal parallels that run through the text, and have decided that perhaps they could give some resemblance of a unified text. Some have even denied that there is a disunity at all. The observations that each of these viewpoints have made are quite clever; their arguments are convincing in some fashion or another. In a similar manner, I would like to demonstrate my own take on the subject of disunity

within *Phaedrus* in this thesis. *Phaedrus* is a complicated text with a wide variety of topics being discussed all at the same time. I must confess that it is beyond my abilities to devise a explanation that can account for every single theme or parallelism within the dialogue. Instead, I would like to focus on the portions of the dialogue which could be suggested to bring together the two halves of *Phaedrus*. Therefore, the overview of the dialogue presented here is solely concerned with the sections of the dialogue that could be the basis of my arguments. I would like to argue that the element that unites *Phaedrus* could potentially be the notion of soul-leading through rhetoric and myth. I would suggest that the first half of the dialogue is read as a series of rhetorical speeches that aim at persuading Phaedrus, whereas the second part could be conceived as having an account as to why those previous speeches might have failed or succeeded. In order to introduce the reader to the discussion that will take place in the following pages, I would like to elaborate on the dialogue with regards to a number of essential observations.

2.1 The First Half of *Phaedrus*

The first half of the dialogue starts with the scene where Socrates meets Phaedrus at the city gates of Athens. The duo begin their dialogue as they move away from the city and travel into the countryside surrounding the city gates. As it has been stated above, the dialogue can be broken down into three major parts. Each part is represented by a single speech on the topic of love. The first speech is composed by Lysias the rhetorician. A known figure within the political circles of Athens, It has been suggested that Lysias must have had a considerable fame as a skillful orator.[2] The speech is recited by Phaedrus, who initially expresses his adoration for both the speech and the orator who composed it. Once the first speech is done with, Socrates expresses his dissatisfaction with it. Phaedrus then challenges Socrates to come up with a new speech of similar theme and arguments. Said speech comes in the form of Socrates' first attempt at delivering a piece of rhetoric on the nature of *Eros*. In the dialogue this speech is presented as an improvement over the previous one. Socrates, however, is

[2] Nails, *The People of* Plato, p. 193.

not at all happy with the result and sets out to compose a new speech on *Eros*. This time the speech is substantially different form the previous attempts, since unlike the first couple of speeches this one employs a major mythic story as its core element. This third speech on *Eros* is meant to serve as an apology to *Eros* since it is Socrates' claim that he has sinned for what he has said previously. The speech is called a "palinode" in the dialogue, and it will be referred as "the palinode" throughout this thesis. After the palinode, Phaedrus and Socrates both express their satisfaction by the speech, claiming that it is indeed the best among the three. This is where the first half of *Phaedrus* ends, and the other half begins, since there is no mention of *Eros* as a theme for the rest of the dialogue.

2.1.1 Lysias' Speech on Love

The thesis statement of this speech by Lysias can be formulated as follows: "A person should not grant (sexual) favors to a lover, but he must prefer a non-lover for that purpose" (234b-c). It is a rather brief speech, and the way it is organised is rather simplistic. The thesis statement is repeatedly put into different situations that could occur between a hypothetical lover and his beloved. In its essence the claim here is that love is a problematic thing that could cause problems between the lover and the beloved resulting in the harm that the beloved might suffer. For instance, lovers, Lysias argues, might "keep a tally of the costs they incur and of the benefits they confer because of love, and when they add to the list the labor they exert, they believe that they have already paid back a sufficient gratitude to those they once loved (231a-b)" This is rather typical of Lysias' arguments in this speech: love is essentially a problem that could put the beloved in a somewhat disadvantageous position in a romantic relationship. It could even embarrass the beloved. Lacking self-control, lovers tend to talk about their affairs publicly, and that could embarrass the beloved in social situation (232a). Lysias' speech contains a number of such arguments on the lover's lack of self-control and the possible ways the beloved might get hurt from those. The alternative he proposes is the relationship between the beloved and the non-lover (234c). It is supposedly a mutual relationship in which both parties benefit. In each piece of argument that constitute a series of arguments that make up the whole of

Lysias' speech, the calculating and distanced attitude of the non-lover is pitted against the unpleasant excessiveness of the lover. The non-lover is presented as a clear-minded individual whose main concern is his own well being beyond anything else. Yet, he does not fail to pay regard to the benefit of his partner in that relationship as well. Considering the above mentioned examples for instance, Lysias argues the non-lover to be responsible and mindful of the reputation of both parties. Whereas the lovers keeps track of his expenses for his beloved, non-lovers "don't blame love as an excuse for their neglect of family matters. . .(231b)" Likewise, the non-lovers would stay quiet to preserve their dignity in the presence of others (232a). The speech can be understood as Lysias' attempt to seduce Phaedrus: by describing himself subtly as a non-lover, he discredits the lover-beloved relationship so that he can push his own case further. Socrates can see through Lysias' trick. A few pages after Lysias' speech, Socrates tells the situation to young phaedrus as follows:

> There once was a darling boy, a young man really, a very beautiful young man, and he had a great number of lovers. One of them was wily and persuaded the young man that he was not in love with him at all when in fact he loved him no less than the others. When he making his case, he tried to persuade the young lad that he ought to grant his favors to someone who didn't love him rather than to one who did. (237b)

In terms of argumentative structure, Lysias does not deliver much. Each of his arguments is put forward as an isolated case loosely tied with the general thesis statement that is only put forward towards the end of the speech. There does not seem to be a clear progression of the arguments. Each separate case follows the other with no immediately evident reason for that being the case. The arguments usually begin with phrases like "besides" or "and another thing". The lack of a well-structured argumentative organization offends Socrates as well. Immediately after Phaedrus is done with reading the speech to Socrates, the philosopher complains that what Lysias has done with his speech is that he has repeated the same basic argument a few times over to make a case for himself. He even finds the orator to "have a youthful swagger, showing off how he could say the same thing first in one way, then in another, and doing both very well" (235a). His response to the speech prompts Phaedrus to challenge the philosopher to come up with another speech of the same vein. The main

thesis of this upcoming speech is determined by Phaedrus: the lover is sicker than the non-lover (236b). It is also demanded that the new speech should be "fuller and more appropriate than his" (236b). Therefore, Socrates sets out to come up with a speech of his own.

2.1.2 Socrates' First Speech on Love

The thesis statement provided by Phaedrus says that the lover is sicker than the non-lover, and Socrates is keen to develop his arguments upon that foundation. However, there is one crucial task that awaits him. Previously Socrates complained that Lysias' speech lacked coherent argumentative structure; there was no necessity regarding the progression of his arguments. Now that it is his turn to try his hand at composing a similar speech, he "must not suffer what (he) fault(ed) in others (237c)". Therefore what must be done before else is agreeing upon a definition of love. This represents Socrates' decision to give his thesis a strong conceptual foundation upon which he can develop his arguments. Each fundamental term or concept that he will make use in the following arguments will be defined earlier at this point, so that once the essential elements have been laid out, it would be easier to elaborate on their numerous interactions. Before defining love, for instance, Socrates makes a distinction on the nature of love, since love is what soul experiences. Therefore, he separates soul into two major components. These are the forces that lead the souls of people: "One of them is our inborn desire for pleasure, the other an acquired opinion in pursuit of the best (237e)." These forces are in constant interaction with each other. Sometimes they agree, other time they quarrel. When the power struggle between them favors one over the other, the results change accordingly. When "right opinion with reason rules and leads towards the best", it is called moderation (238a). When the unreasoned desire wins, however, it is called excess. Now that we have defined these two states as in which the souls finds itself depending on the factor that leads it, the definition of love can be given. Socrates defines love as what the soul experiences when the passion without reason overcomes moderation and drives the soul towards the erotic pleasure of beauty (238c). To put it bluntly, love is indeed a kind of madness. Phaedrus' request has been to consider love as a kind of sickness, and that is the next step in Socrates'

speech. If the lover is sick, like all sick people, he will prefer those things that does not resist him:

> For a sick man, anything that offers little to no resistance is sweet, and anything that is equal or stronger is hateful. So a lover will not willingly put up with a boyfriend who is stronger or even on equal terms with himself, but he will make him weaker and more needy, always. (238e-239a)

Not only love is excessive behavior on the lover's part, it is also a degrading element that slowly weakens the beloved, lest the lover experiences resistance. In the following arguments Socrates lists the ways the lover might render his beloved weak and powerless for his own convenience. Similar to Lysias' version, a few cases listed here wherein the lover actively works against his beloved eventually stunting his growth (239a-241b). Finally when the love is gone and the lover's mind is cleared of love, he abandons his lover with shame. The beloved is left with nothing: the lover's interventions have disrupted his progress. The relationship Socrates describes here is quite violent and distressing. Whereas the lover is depicted as if he has been stricken with disease, it is the beloved who really suffers. With his development arrested, his progress to manhood halted, the relationship has been utterly destructive for him (241b-c). Realising his fault in giving himself fully to the service of the lover, as Socrates speculates, the beloved would regret deeply for his folly. He would rather submit himself to a non-lover, Socrates argues, therefore reaching a similar conclusion to that of Lysias with this speech (241c). Similarities put aside, we might observe a certain element that could make this speech superior to the previous one: its argumentative structure. At the very beginning of the speech, Socrates speaks as if he has decided on his goal for this speech. Lysias' speech has failed at being "clear and compact" with a "finely honed vocabulary" (*Phaedrus*, Waterfield, 234e-235a). Socrates attempts to right this wrong by defining the essential elements of this speech: soul and love. Soul has two parts. One of these parts can lead to excessive behaviour and love is the excessive indulgence in bodily pleasures. Once these terms are defined with some clarity, Socrates focuses of the content of his arguments and proceeds to elaborate on how love as excessive desire might affect people. The content, however, proves to be problematic when Socrates expresses his regret for describing love as a

fundamentally negative and destructive agent. He finds his own speech as well as Lysias to be "simple-minded, even slightly irreverent" (242d). He believes that he has sinned because: ". . . if *Eros* (the god of love) exists, as in fact he does, whether as a god or at least something divine, he could not be bad in a way, although both speeches spoke just now as if he were" (242d-e). Immediately following that confession Socrates sets out to compose a new speech. This time he would like to apologize to *Eros* for slandering his good name (243d). The change the new speech brings with itself, however, is not limited to an apology to *Eros*. The next speech is where Socrates introduces the major mythic narrative of *Phaedrus*: the winged charioteer of the souls.

2.1.3 Socrates' Second Speech on Love: The Palinode

The previous speech began with a description of what soul consisted of, and then proceeded to give a definition of love with reference to those descriptions. A similar effort can be observed within this third speech on *Eros* as well. There is, however, a substantial difference between this speech and the previous ones. In an attempt to correct his misrepresentation of *Eros*, Socrates sets out to compose a new speech in honor of the god of love. Unlike the previous efforts, however, this speech does not progress in an argumentative manner. Rather, it is a mythical narrative; the longest and perhaps the most colorful among the few mythical stories that can be found in *Phaedrus*. The story accounts for the soul's journey in the heavens, followed by its fall to the earth, and eventually the possibility of ascension towards the divinity. It occupies a rather substantial portion of the dialogue, and as we will discuss in the third chapter, it might possibly serve a great purpose in our attempts to bring about a reasonable interpretation of *Phaedrus*. Before we begin with this palinode, I would like to make a detour and discuss a certain section within the dialogue that precedes the palinode. It is likewise a mythical narrative. Since Socrates demonstrates an interesting approach to interpreting mythic stories within this section, I would like to address the passage in question before I begin with the palinode.

At the beginning of the dialogue, Socrates meets Phaedrus at the city gates. Realising Phaedrus' eagerness to discuss rhetorical speeches, Socrates suggests that they leave the city gates behind and venture into the countryside surrounding the city (229a). At

some point during their walk, Phaedrus shows Socrates a place where the mythological character Boreas the North Wind has supposedly captured Oreithuia (229b). Phaedrus asks Socrates if he believes the myth to be true (229c). Socrates answers that "(he) wouldn't be so out of place" if he told him that he did not believe in such stories, and follows by reminding Phaedrus that there is a certain inclination among some "wise men" to give supposedly reasonable explanations for such fantastic stories. We might argue that the people Socrates talks about are those who come up with reasonably physical explanations for such flights of fancy. "All those non-believers employing some boorish sophistication. . . " Socrates claims, ". . . will make everything conform to probability" (229e). The efforts of those who try to force fantastical imagery into the constraints of reason and common-sense are indeed futile, since reason cannot exhaust the vast repertoire of mythic imagery. Besides, providing secular or physical explanations to such narratives is missing the point. Socrates holds the view that a mythic story is as valuable as the lessons it might teach him about himself (230a). He is after all unsure of what he might truly be: "For me, the question is whether I happen to be some sort of beast even more complex in form and more tumultuous than the hundred-headed Typhon, or whether I am something simpler and gentler, having a share by nature of the divine and the unTyphonic." (230a) Therefore it could be argued that what gives a mythic narrative its worth is the story it tells about one's self; the lessons one can learn about him/herself. We will elaborate on the importance of this passage in the third chapter of this thesis. Now let us begin with the palinode and see the story told within. In a similar way to the second speech on *Eros*, the palinode divides the soul into to parts. However this time this division of soul is enveloped within a colorful narrative story.

This new speech is a narrative on the nature of love and the souls. The analogy Socrates utilizes to describe the workings of the soul is a chariot, with its two horses and the charioteer (246a-b). Both gods and human beings possess souls of their own. Their difference, however, come from their inclination to imperfection or sinfulness. As the parable goes, a pair of horses pull the chariot of the human soul: one being of the noble breed, the other being the opposite (246b). Souls traverse the entire universe, following gods as they circle the heavens in a great procession. All sorts of gods and souls alike

circle the True Being: the colorless or shapeless entity that is the source of all knowledge (247d-e). Gods behold the true being and immerse themselves in its truth, whereas human souls struggle to even catch a glimpse of it. The further away from perfection the soul is, the harder it becomes for it to see the True Being for itself (248b-c). Souls race and topple over each other in their attempts to behold the beauty of the True Being. As the soul collides with others, it is wounded. It will struggle to stay afloat in the air, but consequently will be dragged down towards the earth. The soul continues its fall until it hangs on to something solid. Then, it will find respite in the inanimate body that has saved it The soul in return gives motion to it. Socrates names this union of the soul and the inanimate body "a living creature (246c)." When the weak soul falls down from its climb to the summit and finds itself trapped in a physical body, it is stricken with forgetfulness. The bits and pieces the soul remembers from its past life in heavens will determine the course of its life in that material body. The soul that remembers the most of what it has seen in the heavens will come to life as a lover of wisdom: a philosopher, who is followed by law-abiding rulers, politicians, doctors, mystic seers, pets, craftsmen, sophists and eventually tyrants:

> In the first generation of a soul's fall to earth, she can never be planted into a brute animal, but the soul which has witnessed Being the most in heaven shall be planted into the seed of someone who will become a lover of wisdom, or a lover of beauty, or of something musical and erotic. (248d)

The soul can re-ascend to the heavens once it inhabited, provided that it does not fail to remember what it has seen in the divine realm. Philosophers, as it appears, are among those who remember the most of heavens and the true being that lies beyond. Perhaps, Phaedrus too could be one of those souls, since as we have stated before, he seems quite attuned to the notion of *Eros*. Afterall, all three speeches appeal to his fondness for eroticism. Furthermore, as the flow of the dialogue shows us, Phaedrus seems to be most pleased with the palinode among the three speeches he has heard on *Eros*. He may not be a wise man himself. Yet, there might be a chance that he could be a lover of wisdom.

What happens when the souls sees another and falls in love with him? As the narrative goes, Socrates tells us that when those who are stricken with the madness of love look at the faces of their beloved and behold their beauty, they are reminded of the true beauty of the true being (251a). The beloved's beauty is merely a fraction of the absolute wonder of the True Being, yet for the wisdom-loving soul it is enough to remind the lover of its past life among gods. When the beloved sees the lover, the wings of his soul start blossoming as it were; yet, it does not possess the power to fly away (249d). Remembering those days that they have spent among the gods in the heavens, the soul in love yearns to go back to the heavens and directs its attention to the skies, wishing that someday it could return from where it has fallen down. The others that do not share this passion, ignorant of their longing, take them for mad. The divine love which is mistaken for a mere disease of the mind is in fact what instigates the soul's long journey towards the divinity. Socrates counts the philosopher as the soul most attuned to the call of this divine frenzy (249c). The philosopher's soul adores the beauty when he sees it, falls in love as he is infused with inspiration from the Muses. Considering all that, one might mistake the philosopher for a lunatic, since there has been almost no mention of reason. It appears that what helps the philosopher on his way to the realm of the True Being is love, instead of cold and measured reason. That is the purpose Socrates seems to attribute to love: It is what inspires the lover with the desire to transcend his mundane self and yearn for the divine truth.

2.2 The Second Half of *Phaedrus*

It could be argued that as the second half of the dialogue begins, we as the readers are faced with a problem. The series of discussion on the nature of love that have been dominating the previous half of *Phaedrus* are nowhere to be found within this following section of the dialogue. It has to be said that this portion of the dialogue is home to vast variety of topic ranging from the worth of the written word to a brief mythic story about cicadas and their loyalty to divine Muses. As far as our immediate interests are concerned, however, we will have to divert our attention towards a certain subject matter. It could be argued that it is still the most substantial piece of discussion within the second half. It is our observation that the series of discussions on the skillful

practice of rhetoric that aims at persuading people is the major theme within the second half of the dialogue. In this portion of *Phaedrus* we are presented with an essential distinction in regards to the rhetorical practices. *Phaedrus* describes two fundamental approaches to persuasion through rhetoric. The first one is the sophist's approach to speech-making. If we were to summarize the sophist's approach to persuasion through words, we would state that the primary domain wherein they practice their craft is public environments such as law courts (261a-b). Their practices could be deceitful, since it is by nature of their approach to persuasion they to equip themselves with such tools of persuasion that they can even speak in favor of opposite sites with a comparable enthusiasm and commitment (261e). In comparison to the sophist, Socrates presents another approach to persuasion or soul-leading: the philosopher's practice of rhetoric. A number of advisory guidelines on the skills that might be put into practice in the philosopher's efforts to persuade Phaedrus are provided throughout the rest of the dialogue. In this section, I would like to give a brief overview of the aforementioned set of skills of the philosopher's practice, as well as the notion of soul-leading described within the dialogue.

2.2.1 Rhetoric and its Soul-leading Capabilities

There are a few sections within the dialogue where Socrates initiates a discussion on the basics of persuasion/ soul-leading, as well as their relation to rhetorical practices. As it is stated towards the beginning of this section, rhetoric is the tool to persuade people, whether that serves an admirable end such as the philosopher's practice is supposed to ensure, or it serves an evil or harmful purpose as in the case of the rhetorician ignorant of his subject matter (260c). The persuasive use of rhetoric is explained in the dialogue as follows: "Isn't the art of rhetoric, taken as a whole, a certain guiding of souls through words, not only in law courts and other places of public assembly but also in private?" (261a) This is in contrast to how Phaedrus has imagined rhetoric to be: he has not been familiar with the notion that rhetoric could be performed in private environments as well. In the traditional sense the art of rhetoric finds its purpose in the public domain, where it is utilized in speech at the public assemblies, whereas it is expressed in written word at the court (261b). These

particular interpretations of rhetoric is an expression of how persuasion through speeches must have been conceived previously: the manipulation of the public opinion in favor of a certain case. Socrates elaborates on the subject and describes the purpose of such practice of speech-making with reference to its ability "to make everything similar to everything else, provided that things are comparable and able to be compared." The rhetorician hides the very fact that he is doing this; as well as he brings it to light if he catches someone employing the same methods." (261e)

2.2.2 Guidelines for the Art of Rhetoric

From this point onward, Socrates sets out to establish the difference between such practices of rhetoric, and the soul-leading efforts of the philosophy by proposing a number of advisory guidelines that the budding rhetorician could benefit from.

The initial advice is given at the very beginning of the second half: "Then, isn't it necessary for those who intend to speak well and beautifully to have before else a discursive understanding of the truth about the subject he means to discuss?" (259e) A number of translations of *Phaedrus* approach this statement in a variety of ways. Whereas Scully's translation uses the word "discursive" suggesting that the truth of the matter should be articulated by means of argument, Waterfield for instance does way with that expression and simply states that "the mind of the speaker must know the truth of the matter to be addressed." (*Phaedrus*, Waterfield, 259e) Similarly, Nehamas and Woodruff hold the view that the correct translation should state that those who wish to speak well and nobly have to have in mind the truth about the subject." (*Phaedrus*, Nehamas & Woodruff, 259e). Although Scully's translation could be a bit problematic when we argue that the subject matter of *Eros* is beyond the limits of rational argumentation because of its irrational nature, the most basic statement holds true. A rhetorician should have the knowledge of the subject matter he/she wishes to speak about.

The second advice stems from two particular premises that we can find in *Phaedrus*. First, the domain of the art of rhetoric is not limited to public environments; it can be practiced privately, in the form of a dialogue as well. (261a) The second premise is

that some souls are simple by their nature, whereas some others are complex and multi-colored. The assertion that precedes the premise is that when the orator sets out to be an expert on anything, he must first decide whether the subject of his expertise is simple or complex by its nature:

> When considering the nature of anything at all, shouldn't we first see whether what we want to become experts in, and to make others experts in, is simple or complex? Next, if it's simple, shouldn't we try to see what natural capacity it has for acting and on what it acts, or what natural capacity it has for being acted upon and by what it is acted upon? (*Phaedrus*, Waterfield, 270d)

According to that rationale the souls could be simple or complex (multi-formed/ multi-colored) by their nature. Indeed, Socrates advises those who wish to become rhetoricians to "know what forms the soul possesses." (271d) It is essentially an advice towards understanding the multitude of individuals in life and developing the capacity to put them under certain categories with respect to the complexity or simplicity of their souls. The importance of this lies within the fact that it will help the orator develop his the content and the style of his speeches accordingly. Once the orator figures out what kind of speeches work best with what kind of individuals, he will have come a bit closer to "speaking with art." (272b)

The final advice for the rhetorician finds its expression in the following statement: "But I suspect that you would say this at least: every speech like a living creature should be put together with its own body so that it is not without a head or without a foot but has a middle and extremities, written in such a way that its parts fit together and form a whole." (264c) What is described here is the organic structure of the speech. Not only that includes the logical progression of the arguments, it also argues that the speech should look *alive* to its audience. We will elaborate on the notion of liveliness in the third chapter, so as far as our purpose here is concerned here we could conceive it as the expression of the speeches ability to adapt and bend to the direction changes that might take place within a rhetorical interaction of two or more people.

CHAPTER 3

INTERPRETING THE DISUNITY IN *PHAEDRUS*

One of the first things that a reader might observe about Phaedrus is that the text seems to be divided into two distinct parts. For instance, R. B. Rutherford observes that Phaedrus displays some significant discrepancies between its two halves in terms of form and content.[3] Whereas the section of the dialogue that has been deemed as its first half is mainly concerned with the theme of *Eros*, the remaining half is about rhetorical practices and speeches in general. The part of the dialogue up to 257b, which is generally perceived as the first "half" of the text, contains three speeches on the subject matter of *Eros*. The first monologue is the recitation of a speech by Lysias the orator (228d). Its main thesis is that a person should grant favors to a non-lover instead of a lover. The next two monologues are speeches made by Socrates. Socrates' first speech is in a similar vein with the previous chapter in terms of both argumentative form and content. However, it presented as a speech that employs a likewise rhetorical approach, yet with a much more organized argumentative structure (238e). *Eros* remains the main subject matter, and Socrates reaches a similar conclusion in comparison to his peer, claiming that love is harmful by its nature. The next monologue however, is vastly different in style compared to the previous attempts (243e). This time, *Eros* has been handled within the mythic form; the speech is no longer a rhetorical piece of speech-making, but a fully-fledged mythic narrative on the nature of the soul and love. The discrepancies in content between the two halves of *Phaedrus* become truly apparent in the second half of the dialogue, wherein the theme of *Eros* has been dropped altogether. Unlike the first half of the dialogue that takes *Eros* as its main topic of discussion, the second half seems to be primarily about the art of rhetoric. As of 259e, the theme of Eros is replaced with a discussion regarding the use of the

[3] Rutherford, *The Art of Plato*, p. 241.

written word. The coexistence of myth and rhetoric, as well as the sudden thematic shift from Eros to rhetoric within Phaedrus reveals the peculiar nature of the dialogue: There are essentially two features that seems to be causing some sort of discrepancy within the dialogue: Firstly, both mythic narratives and rhetorical arguments are utilized to discuss the matter of love. As we have seen in the previous chapter, the relative failures of the first two speeches on love prompts Socrates to come up with a mythical narrative on the same subject. Secondly, there is a sudden change in theme between the two halves of the dialogue. Love as the primary subject matter is abandoned right after the third speech and, the dialogue continues with a new subject matter: rhetoric. These two aspects of the dialogue have been at the focus of the discussion regarding the seemingly disunified nature of *Phaedrus*. In the following sections, the case for unity will be discussed within the context of theme and form. After a thorough review of some of the most dominant arguments about this subject, we will attempt to come up with a feasible approach that could lead us reliably towards a reasonable suggestion for a unifying element. Different approaches that have been used at tackling the problem of unity within *Phaedrus* have a long history. One of the earliest literary and philosophical critique of Phaedrus features Iamblichus of as the author. Born in Syria around 245 A.D. (Dillon and Iamblichus, 2009, p.7), Iamblichus remarks that Phaedrus cannot contain more than one primary theme, not can it have one of its many parts be counted as its primary subject matter. Given these claims, Iamblichus asserts that the primary theme of the dialogue is beauty.[4] he is not the only one to suggest that there might be a primary theme that unites the two halves of the dialogue. In the following pages, some of these approaches will be demonstrated so that the reader might have a grasp of the history of the previous attempts at tackling the problem. D. Werner studies a plethora of arguments concerning the problem in meticulous detail, and defines them in clear cut categories, a fact that renders said article one of the most comprehensive amongst its peers. His studies lists four major possible approaches towards the handling of the problem. The thematic approach focuses the theme or subject matter as the unifying element within the dialogue.

[4] Iamblichus, *Iamblichi Chalcidensis in Platonis dialogos commentariorum fragmenta,* p. 93.

Rhetoric and *Eros* are the major contenders for this position.[5] The non-thematic approach argues that non-thematic elements might bridge the gap between disunified parts of the dialogue. Form and dramatic style are the main issues that are discussed within that section.[6] The debunking approach presents a rather thought-provoking argument that the problem of unity in *Phaedrus* is rendered obsolete once the vast differences in aesthetic appreciation between the Greek readers of antiquity and the modern day scholars have been thoroughly understood.[7] Finally, Werner proposes a strategic approach. Here, the problem of unity in *Phaedrus* is considered a deliberate choice on part of the author. It is argued that, the apparent disunity within the dialogue might have been established to serve a certain function in communicating certain ideas within the dialogue like the parts of the soul, nature of love and the essentials of skillfully practiced rhetoric etc.[8] After the non-thematic approach is discussed in the third section, I attempt to lay out the essential arguments of this theses in comparison to Werner's understanding of the strategic approach.

3.1 The Need for Unity

The question that we might ask before we begin this investigation is whether we should even look for a certain element that could mean unity within *Phaedrus*. Why have the readers of *Phaedrus* been so compelled to find unity within the text? A couple of reasons come to mind. As we have discussed in the previous chapter there is a sudden change in argument and the types of speech in the first half of the dialogue. Rhetorical arguments are replaced by a mythic narrative in the palinode. We will see in the following discussions that the coexistence of myth and rhetoric has been a rather problematic issue within *Phaedrus*. The change from argument to mythic content might possibly suggest that there has been a need for that change within the narrative

[5] Werner, "Plato's *Phaedrus* and the Problem of Unity", p. 94.

[6] *Ibid*., p. 114.

[7] *Ibid*., p. 125.

[8] *Ibid*., p. 129.

of the dialogue. There seems to be a difference between the sophist's and the philosopher's practice of rhetoric. Whereas the sophist's tools are limited to rational arguments, the philosopher might make use of mythic imagery as well. In the very beginning of the dialogue, as Rutherford points out[9], Socrates greets his young peer with a question: "Where do you come from, Phaedrus, my friend, where are you going? (227a)" The question can be interpreted as an inquiry about Phaedrus' choice of intellectual guidance. Indeed, he has a speech written by Lysias the sophist, which could suggest that he has chosen a sophist to lead him. When Phaedrus recites the contents of that very speech to Socrates, we come to understand that Lysias is in fact trying to trick him into granting him favors, sexual or otherwise. Socrates is not at all happy with where his young peer seems to be going. As the conversation continues, we might realise that the two speeches by Socrates that follow Lysias' speech represent the philosopher's attempts to lure young Phaedrus away from the toxicity of Lysias' practice of rhetoric. After a lengthy and colorful narrative on the soul, love and the True Being, we see Phaedrus finally give in: he realizes the superiority of Socrates' philosophical use of mythic imagery over Lysias' rather unskilled rhetorical practice (257c). The use of myth in philosophical discourse seems to triumph over the sophist's rhetoric and any explanations that could be given on that account could provide us with the reason to wonder what the underlying point might be. The second reason as to why it would not be so out of place for an ordinary reader to look for an element of unity in the dialogue is that *Phaedrus* itself seems to advocate that idea. When we get to the second half of the dialogue where Socrates discusses the orator's craft with his young peer it reads: "But I suspect that you would say this at least: every speech like a living creature should be put together with its own body so that it is not without a head or without a foot but has a middle and extremities, written in such a way that its parts fit together and form a whole (264c)." What we could speculate about this particular statement is that some degree of organic unity, in which each part is within proper arrangement with the other in the sense that each part occupies its proper place and fulfills its function, could mean the health or integrity of the given text. A literary

[9] Rutherford, *The Art of Plato*, p. 243.

work is held together by the proper arrangement of its parts, wherein each part engages in a fitting relation to others and the whole text (268d). In the light of these statements, one would like to see a similar attention to proper organisation from the very text that contains those above lines. Perhaps, we must differentiate thematic and formal unity. The attempts to unite the mythic narrative of *Eros* with the rhetorical arguments on love as well as the practice of rhetoric itself seem to be somewhat different than the efforts to find unity through form. Therefore, it is important that we decide how we would like to approach the problem of disunity. Do we hope to find an underlying theme that envelops the whole text, or do we look for certain formal or dramatic threads that run through the whole dialogue?

There have been proposed a number of arguments suggesting that the problem of disunity in *Phaedrus* is essentially a "non-problem". The seriousness of the problem, the argument goes, is somewhat overestimated, and the best course of action when dealing with the problem would be to discredit its legitimacy. This particular approach does not recognise the problem as genuine, and attempts to debunk its essential premises. M. Heath is one of the proponents of this "debunking approach" to the problem of unity. The initial premise of Heath's series of arguments is that the unity of dramatic elements is the most fundamental aspect of the formal unity within *Phaedrus*. Approaching the dialogue as a piece of mimetic or narrative text, Heath speculates that *Phaedrus* displays a formal dramatic unity: it possesses a beginning, a middle part and an end.[10] Heath pushes his point further arguing that *Phaedrus* shares formal similarities in its dramatic structure with some of the most well-known pieces of dramatic literature of classical antiquity such as Aeschylus' *Eumenides*, Sophocles' *Antigone*, or Euripides' *Heracles*. The similarities, as Heath argues, lie within the observation that in each of these literary works, when the dramatic tension comes to a natural rest there occurs a shift in theme for the sake of the continuation of the plot.[11] The reader might observe that there is indeed a shift in thematic interest in *Phaedrus*:

[10] Heath, "The Unity of Plato's Phaedrus", p. 161.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 162.

the discussion regarding the nature of Eros comes to a halt, after which the dialogue continues with the subject matter of rhetoric at its focus (257b). Heath's explanation reveals that such was the common practice in the art of drama-writing, and the Greek audience of the period was accustomed to that. Heath argues that the Aristotelian tradition of literature considers a piece of narrative or mimetic text whole if the said text has a distinct beginning, middle part and an ending. Indeed in *Poetics*, Aristotle asserts that, as far as the written text demonstrates the use of any metric structure, such literary works could be called works of poetry (1447b 19). The argument that follows is once we perceive *Phaedrus* as more-or-less a piece of narrative literature, and it is shown that it meets the minimal structural integrity and coherence required of such texts, the problem of disunity simply becomes obsolete. The audience, Heath argues, expected a certain degree of formal unity within a given literary text, and the kind of formal unity *Phaedrus* provided deemed to be sufficient: No further thematic unity was expected of the text, having a unified plot guaranteed its integrity as a piece of literature. The reason behind our evaluation of *Phaedrus* as a structurally problematic and disunified text, as Heath suggests, simply stems from the vast difference in aesthetic appreciation between the modern and the ancient Greek audiences.[12] Heath disagrees with the certain tendency among modern scholars to impose demand for thematic unity in similar literary works. Instead, he argues for a scholarly position where the text should be appreciated as is. Furthermore, Heath would like to keep his distance with any attempt to judge certain evident formal connections and parallelisms as the indicators of some hidden meaning on a deeper thematic level, deeming such an endeavor to be "necessarily more speculative."[13] What we find within the text, Heath argues, is a series of recurring images and motifs, loosely tied together, the coexistence of which might not necessarily mean that they serve to reveal a latent unifying meaning. Heath's suggestions regarding the historicity of the problem of unity in *Phaedrus* are based on his observations that there has not been much systematic

[12] Heath, "The Unity of Plato's Phaedrus", p. 163.

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 161.

attempt at tackling with the problem of disunity before the late Neo-Platonists.[14] In support of his arguments, Heath refers to Hermogenic Corpus: a collection of treatises on the art of rhetoric that are attributed to the Hermogenes of Tarsus. A contemporary of Marcus Aurelius, Hermogenes is said to be child prodigy whose oratorical skills were widely known. His date of birth is suggested to be around 161 A.D.[15] Referring to the Hermogenic Corpus, Heath speculates that, within the context of classical antiquity and before the late period Neo-Platonists, thematic plurality in dialogues would be received not with alarm or confusion, but with an appreciation of taste in dramatic rhythm.[16] It is discussed in the Hermogenic Corpus that the intermingling of conversation (rhetorical form) and inquiry within a philosophical disquisition, or the shifting between conversation and inquiry allows the mind to relax, similar to the rise and the decline of tension in a musical instrument (Hermogenes, 455. 1-5).[17] Heath speculates that the intellectual circles of the period were fully aware of such stylistic decisions, and enjoyed them as they were thought to bring a pleasant rhythm to the text.

Heath's arguments seem to rely on sound historical observations, and they represent a reasonable approach to the issue of disunity. However, arguing that the dialogue does not show the symptoms of disunity might not necessarily provide the reader with the kind of interpretation that could enrich their reading experience. As Socrates himself says in the dialogue the written word suffers from the absence of its father (275e). Unfortunately Plato is not here to defend his dialogue. In that regard, every comment we make or every interpretation we come up with about the dialogue is bound to be speculation. The attempts to find hidden trails of formal elements or themes that could

[14] Heath, "The Unity of Plato's Phaedrus", p. 164.

[15] Hermogenes, *Hermogenes' on types of style*, p.xi.

[16] Heath, "The Unity of Plato's Phaedrus", p. 164.

[17] Hermogenes, *Invention and method*, p. 265.

unite the dialogue in some manner are perhaps no more speculative than claiming that the dialogue is already unified. Perhaps what we should work for is to devise new ways that could potentially enrich the reader's experience of *Phaedrus*. There could indeed be a deep and observable rupture between the aesthetic sensibilities of the ancient Greek readership and the modern scholarly audience. It could also be the case that a systematic search for unifying theme started long after *Phaedrus* was written. These statements do not necessarily invalidate the search for formal elements that could tie the text together or a unifying subject matter. Such attempts aim at finding out new ways to approach the dialogue in the hopes that the text could have something more to reveal. They represent the efforts to make sense of a piece of literature with astounding color, richness and complexity.

Another reason why we might look for a unifying principle within the dialogue is that it could account for the jarring shifts of theme and form that many readers of *Phaedrus* cannot help but notice. Indeed given the aforementioned sections from the dialogue, wherein a piece of literature is advised to possess an organic unity amongst its parts, and the noticeably fragmented nature of the dialogue the reader might be tempted to think that Plato has botched his attempt at creating a coherent piece of literature. However, such an approach might come off as rather reckless, since it suggests that perhaps the greatest figure of the Western philosophy has neglected the very advise he has given. One feels that, such a state of affairs is unlikely. We can see that C. Griswold is in agreement with such a view as well: the author should be expected to be in control of his/ her writings, in the sense that not a single word should be taken as accidental. He writes: "Roughly put, the main assumption supporting the hypothesis that a text is coherent is that the author knows precisely what he is doing and so that he means to write both what and how he does write."[18]

It is reasonable to expect some sense of a unified meaning from a literary work of *Phaedrus*' pedigree. In agreement with Griswold's views, it could be argued that any

[18] Griswold, *Self-knowledge in Plato's Phaedrus*, p. 11.

textual problem might be perceived as intentional on the part of the author, for it is possible that they might actually serve a purpose.[19]

3.2 Thematic Approach

The very first item on the list is the *Thematic Approach*, which conceives the dialogue as having one major theme to which the other minor themes submit. It is without a doubt that *Phaedrus* is a plentiful text with respect to its vast reservoir of themes and subjects. To ignore the thematic richness of *Phaedrus* would be a gross disservice to any effort to understand the dialogue, as well as a failure to achieve the main objective of this thesis. The dialogue presents perpetual shifts from one theme to another: It indeed starts with a brief piece of rhetorical monologue, before eventually developing into a full-fledged mythic narrative. Likewise, the second part of the dialogue, wherein the art of rhetoric is discussed in considerable detail, ends with another major mythic story. The reader must observe that many themes are interwoven with each other to some degree in *Phaedrus*, rendering any attempts to make clean-cut distinctions and segmentations a rather difficult job. In any case, certain themes and subjects tend to gain the upper hand throughout the dialogue. The thematic approach to the problem of disunity understands that certain themes have been paid so much attention within the dialogue, so that it is reasonable to assert them as the major and dominant theme of the whole text, whereas the rest serves to support or challenge that position. A few supporting claims have been put forward as well: In an attempt to undermine the notion of disunity, some have argued that certain strong thematic links bind the two halves of the dialogue together, working on a more subtle level. Let us investigate a number of accounts which attempt to establish the unity of the dialogue by means of a primary theme.

3.2.1 Rhetoric as the Primary Theme

Robin Waterfield argues that, despite its appearance as a simple conversation between two friends, the dialogue that takes place in *Phaedrus* is a piece of philosophical

[19] Werner, "Plato's *Phaedrus* and the Problem of Unity", p. 128.

writing after all. A philosophical dialogue such as this, as Waterfield asserts, invites the reader to presume that it should present a material unity, a unity of theme or subject matter.[20] He argues that the dialogue gives every impression of being carefully composed, and we do have the right to demand that a careful literary composition conforms to certain standards that a living conversation might ignore, especially when it is a philosophical work. The disunity that we might speak of regarding *Phaedrus* is essentially philosophical. Keeping in mind Heath's observations regarding the matter, we could argue that the dialogue does not display a substantial disunity when it is taken solely as a piece of literature. As we will elaborate in the next section, it does conform to certain elements of dramatic unity such as persistent characters and basic literary structure (a beginning, a middle part and an end). However, *Phaedrus* is not simply a piece of literature; it is also a philosophical text by Plato. I would like to believe suggest that any reader who comes across a text on philosophy will demand to see some sort of coherence throughout the text. Unity of formal or dramatic organization should not suffice, since text on philosophy possess some subject matter as well. They might very well elaborate on a multitude of subject matters. It is difficult however to designate one primary theme in a text where numerous themes and subject matters interact with each other. In any case, let us suppose that there could be one primary theme that unites *Phaedrus*. Waterfield argues that this unifying primary theme overrides the rest, functioning as the ultimate subject matter within the context of the dialogue and rendering the other themes as its mere subordinates. Plato, as his argument goes, has made deliberate attempts at uniting the two halves of the dialogue by utilizing a number of parallelisms. An example of this phenomenon is the parallel use of the themes of recollection and division. Socrates describes the soul's efforts to recollect the plurality of perceptions, and extracting a single essence at 249 b-c in the first half. A similar theme re-occurs in the second half (265d), where he talks about the art of speech where the vision of the orator can form a single idea from a collection of many scattered elements. Such parallelisms that have been woven into the text might encourage the reader to speculate that there could be an underlying thematic unity

[20] Plato, *Phaedrus*, p.xi

within the dialogue. Among the most prominent themes in *Phaedrus*, rhetoric might be considered a worthy candidate for the position. It is revealed even by a superficial reading of the dialogue that, discussions regarding rhetoric occupies a hefty portion of the text. It starts with the speech by Lysias (230e-234c), and it is carried into Socrates' first speech (237b-241d) via a transitional section on the writing style of a rhetorician. After the third and the last speech that focuses on *Eros*, the art of speech-making makes a comeback in the second half of the dialogue (257b-259d). Finally, rhetoric finds itself as the subject of a mythic narrative in the myth of Theuth towards the end of the dialogue (274c-275d). It should also be noted that, the theme of *Eros* is almost nowhere to be seen for the second part of the dialogue, wherein rhetoric practically thrives. In the light of such evidence, one might be tempted to champion rhetoric as the primary subject matter of the whole dialogue. For instance, Nehamas and Woodruff are among the most avid advocates of rhetoric as the primary subject matter of *Phaedrus*. Their argument defends the viewpoint that, the three speeches on the nature of love that takes place in the first half of the dialogue are, in fact, examples of a theory of rhetoric.[21] Each speech, the argument goes, represents different approaches to the art of speech-making.[22] The subject matter of the speeches *Eros*, is of little consequence.

Perhaps, the most obvious argument against the case for the rhetoric stems from the mere presence of Socrates' palinode at 243e. In a dialogue peppered with the mention of rhetoric, the palinode might look rather out of place for some readers. Afterall, it is a piece of mythic narrative stuck between two speeches rhetorical speeches, not to mention its substantial length. It concludes a series of rhetorical speeches on love which eventually transitions into a speech on speech-making. However, one feels the necessity to attribute Plato a stern and dedicated style of authorship that does not waste precious time with fancy exercises of rhetoric. It should strike the reader that, it is rather improbable that Plato might have snuck a lengthy mythic narrative on Eros in his dialogue without a proper context. On the contrary, the palinode comes across as a

[21] Plato, *Phaedrus*, p. xxviii.

[22] *Ibid.*, p. xxviii.

meticulously produced piece of myth. Quoting Waterfield on the subject: "The palinode is not a piece of plausible rhetoric tailored to suit Phaedrus' soul: it is heartfelt Platonic philosophy, designed to awaken Phaedrus' and anyone else's latent philosophical instincts."[23]

This is where Nehamas and Woodruff admit to the possible weak spot in their theory of rhetoric as the primary subject matter. Considering the possibility of the three speeches being the examples of a rhetorical framework built within the second half, the question remains as to why *Eros* has been chosen as the subject matter.[24] Love, Nehamas and Woodruff speculates, could not have been chosen at random; it has been a rather crucial point for Plato, since he has placed it into focus in *Symposium*, and has developed an impressive mythic narrative revolving around it. Nehamas and Woodruff do not press on to answer the question, yet it becomes clear that the sheer importance that has been given to the theme of *Eros* makes it a worthy opponent to rhetoric. For this reason, there have been certain attempts at understanding *Phaedrus* as a Platonic text that revolves around the notion of *Eros*.

3.2.2 *Eros* as the Primary Theme

The initial observation that could be made about the theme of *Eros* in *Phaedrus* is that it is practically missing in the second part of the dialogue. In stark contrast to its previous counterpart, the second half of the dialogue seems to abandon the notion of love completely, and focus on rhetoric until the very end. A detailed and thorough reading of *Phaedrus*, however, should testify to *Eros*' subtle presence for the remainder of the text. For instance, in the section where the practice of the dialectic art is described, a situation is pictured where the orator and his pupil engages in a conversation that is reminiscent of the correspondence described in the palinode: ". . . but it is far more noble, I think, to be serious about these things when a person uses the dialectic art and selects an appropriate soul, sowing and planting his speeches with

[23] Plato, *Phaedrus*, p. xliv.

[24] Plato, *Phaedrus*, p. xix.

knowledge, speeches which have the means to defend themselves and the one who plants them (276e-277a). The image of the orator planting speeches like seeds in the pupil (277a) might be considered parallel to a particular image that is presented in the palinode. The orator's love for the beloved pupil, excites the youngster, streaming waters into his wings, so that the plumage of his soul grows once again: "With the in-flowing of nourishment (beauty that comes from the beloved) the wing's stalk under the surface of the soul begins to swell and to feel the urge to grow from its roots." (251b). In its perfect form, Werner explains, philosophy "involves intense interpersonal relationships", which might be exemplified in the case of the lover and the beloved depicted in the palinode.[25] The intensity of the love they harbor towards each other inspires them for transcendence, since the beauty they see in each other does not belong to them; it belongs to the True Being. The practice of rhetoric is not without erotic passion either, as Socrates calls himself a lover of rhetoric: "I myself am certainly a lover, Phaedrus, of these processes of division and collection, so that I may have the ability to speak and think" (266b). The case against the importance of Eros could be refuted with the help of such observations. Yet, it becomes rather problematic to assert Eros as the singular primary theme of the dialogue. Just as the the case for rhetoric being the primary theme could be put into question with respect to its inadequacy in explaining the presence of *Eros* in the dialogue, *Eros* seems an unlikely candidate for such a position, since it cannot account for the heavy presence of rhetoric throughout *Phaedrus*.

3.3 Non-Thematic Approach

Werner argues that there has been a certain trend among scholarly readers of *Phaedrus* to understand the notion of unity as "thematic unity".[26] In addition to the thematic elements that could be argued to be the primary subject matter of the dialogue, there are also a number of dramatic, stylistic and structural parallels that can be found within *Phaedrus*. Taking thematic unity as the most important aspect of the whole dialogue

[25] Werner, "Plato's *Phaedrus* and the Problem of Unity", p. 101.

[26] *Ibid*., p. 114.

would be erroneous, Werner argues, since "it is the entire *complex* of elements that provides meaning to a given dialogue."[27]. As much as the proponents of the thematic unity approach might have made critical observations, there are indeed certain formal or dramatic elements within *Phaedrus* that seem to take part in both halves of the dialogue. These elements might be argued to provide some kind of unity within the dialogue as it will be discussed on the following pages. After all, the dialogue itself seems to attribute importance to form and overall textual organisation. In the dialogue, young Phaedrus makes the following remark: "I suspect, they would also laugh, Socrates, if someone thinks that tragedy is anything less than the proper arrangement of parts, each fitted appropriately in relation to the other and to the whole (268d)."

Perhaps we could approach the text as a complex being, consisting of numerous parts, working for the well-being of the dialogue. Would it be so out of place to suggest that where we observe thematic unity within the text, we could also hope for stylistic or formal unity that might that accompany the former? *Phaedrus* is without a doubt a substantially complex piece of writing that demands the reader to approach in multiple fronts at once. In lieu of such observations, a few attempts could be made to approach the problem of a unifying principle within *Phaedrus* in addition to the subject matter. There are essentially two categories in which we could discuss non-thematic unity within *Phaedrus*. Firstly, dramatic unity relies on a number observations demonstrating that certain dramatic elements in *Phaedrus* remain somewhat intact throughout the dialogue. Elements like characters or places never really change abruptly. Furthermore, the dialogue has a well defined beginning, a middle part and finally an end. Although there are certain plot points where the subject matter changes, the text appears to be an undivided whole in terms of character persistence and dramatic structure. Secondly, we might observe a few formal patterns that run through the whole dialogue. There seems to be a progression of arguments or speeches within the dialogue. Each piece of speech is followed by another that builds upon the ideas articulated previously. A speech on *Eros*, for instance, is followed by another speech

[27] Werner, "Plato's *Phaedrus* and the Problem of Unity", p. 114.

on the same subject. That speech takes us to a mythic story about the same subject, which in turn leads us to a speech on rhetorician's craft. Werner finds gradual progress in this succession of speeches within *Phaedrus*. He argues that within this particular progression of speeches what he calls *palinodic structure*, each speech is a clear improvement on the other. Following that logic, the dialogue can be understood as a gradual progression of various arguments that are tied together by logical necessity. Although there are certain problems with that viewpoint, these observations might give us some ideas on how to understand the notion of unity within the text.

3.3.1 Dramatic Unity

Werner asserts that *Phaedrus* displays no evidence of disunity once it is taken solely as a literary work. There are a number of dramatic elements that retain their characteristics throughout the text. Werner points out, for instance, there is a unity of time and place in *Phaedrus*.[28] Although Phaedrus and Socrates take a short walk down the river side until they reach their "resting-place" by the first pages of the dialogue (230b), the characters never change their surroundings; the entire dialogue takes place at the same spot, beyond the city limits. Likewise, the characters remain the same throughout the dialogue; although there happen to be a few mentions of third parties, Socrates and Phaedrus are the only participants of the conversation. The plot display a sense of unity as well. As Heath observes, the dialogue possesses a clear cut beginning, a middle part and an ending.[29] The plot flows from one action into the next effortlessly following a logical pattern, as Werner observes. The unity that can be found by means of dramatic elements that are listed above does not invalidate the observations made regarding the arguments on thematic unity. Each approach to the problem of unity might prove to be helpful for the reader, since they might provide the tools by which a deeper insight could be developed towards the dialogue. Each of those dramatic elements listed above might play a significant role in illuminating the contents of the text. Let us take, for instance, the issue of *setting* in *Phaedrus*: Werner remarks the

[28] Werner, "Plato's *Phaedrus* and the Problem of Unity", p. 115.

[29] Heath, "The Unity of Plato's Phaedrus", p. 163.

phenomenon that, *Phaedrus* is the only Platonic dialogue that is set outside the city limits.[30] In the very first lines of the dialogue, the young Phaedrus is headed for the country when he runs into Socrates who accompanies him to the outside the city gates and into the country (227a-b). From that point on, the rural setting remains unchanged for the rest of the dialogue. Some readers might take that observation to be a trivial matter. However, such dramatic elements could prove to be significant speculative tools. In order to illustrate this point, we could refer to Werner, who conceives the setting as a dramatic entity that parallels and amplifies the critical moments of the dialogue, where the content take radical turns. The palinode of Socrates, Werner observes, is described as a moment of furious ecstasy, as super-rational accounts and stories are recited from "the most rational of men".[31] This "unskilled" man (236d), as it appears, has been imbued by divine fury, and it all happens outside the city gates. Indeed, once outside the boundaries of the city, without the guidance of *civilization*, Socrates is swallowed into the divine frenzy that enables him to recite one of the richest mythic narratives in Platonic corpus. The dramatic setting then used to emphasize one of the major dualities within *Phaedrus*: rhetoric practiced by sophists are limited to the civic domain wherein it could only be concerned with individuals and particulars. Once the restrain caused by civilization is removed, Socrates finds the chance to let his speech go free. Only then, outside the boundaries of civilization and sophistry, he can abandon the language of reason and tell an irrational fantastic story about the True Being. If we are to assume that the difference between the sophist' and the philosopher's practice of speech-making is one of the most significant themes of *Phaedrus* as we will argue in the following chapter, then even something as seemingly trivial as dramatic setting could be a tool to communicate major ideas.

3.3.2 Formal-structural Unity

The term "formal unity" refers to the fundamental principle or pattern, according to which the numerous parts of the dialogue are brought together. Keeping in mind the

[30] Werner, "Plato's *Phaedrus* and the Problem of Unity", p. 116.

[31] *Ibid.*, p. 116.

previously mentioned statement that it would be a grave mistake to hold the view that "tragedy is anything less than the proper arrangement of parts, each fitted appropriately in relation to the other and to the whole (268d)." If we were to take this statement, as Werner suggests, and apply it to all kinds of speech-making, including Platonic dialogues, what we'd have would be an argument claiming that.the parts of any text should be organised according to the needs of the whole, so the text itself remains "healthy".[32] Likening the products of speech-making to a living creature, Socrates would like to see that parts should be positioned in a way that would enable them to function most efficiently. Given the clarity of the recited statement above, one cannot help but wonder if Plato himself abode by the rule with his choice of organization within the *dialogue*.

Werner's answer relies on the notion of *palinodic structure*, which accounts for the particular progression of arguments and speeches within the text. Griswold explains *palinodic structure* as a particular Platonic approach the argumental progression, wherein each argument is presented as final, until the next one reveals a further and unanticipated meaning.[33] The previous meaning, Griswold states, is not rejected; instead, the previous argument is reconsidered within the new context provided by the following argument. Werner applies this approaches the dialogue, and the reports that each section within the dialogue is expanded on with the next piece of argument. In terms of the first half of *Phaedrus*, Werner observes that, each speech is a clear improvement over the previous one. The first speech by Lysias, as it is recited by Phaedrus, is an attempt to elaborate on the notion of *Eros*. Phaedrus praises this speech, even goes so far as to claim that speech to be the greatest speech ever written in Greek (234e), as we might observe. A few pages later, Socrates comes up with his own version of a speech on *Eros*, in an effort to supersede his peer's previous speech (238d). When Socrates is finished with his first speech in the dialogue, we find Socrates in great discomfort (242c). He confesses his crime, for he has done *Eros* a great injustice

[32] Werner, "Plato's *Phaedrus* and the Problem of Unity", p. 121.

[33] Griswold, *Self-knowledge in Plato's Phaedrus*, p. 218.

with his previous speech (242d-e). Therefore, the dialogue proceeds to the next speech on *Eros*, the result of which is the wonderful mythic narrative on the winged chariots of souls, which is at the same time the final speech on the same subject for the remainder of the dialogue (244a). This progression of the speeches continues in the second half of the dialogue, where each speech is likewise presented as final, only to be revealed incomplete by the following one.[34] The mythic palinode is superseded by the discussion regarding the written word (257b). The written word, in a similar manner, is cast inferior before live, oral practice of rhetoric (273d). Werner pictures this procession similar to an onion-like structure, where each layer is placed on top of another layer. He warns, however, that the analogy should not be taken to far as to suggest that, there might me a core to that "onion": a core idea that can be found if one goes further down. In fact, Werner remarks that the argumentative "layers" that represent individual sets of arguments within *Phaedrus* do not go back; the progression is always outwards, towards a "continual `other´ or `beyond´" which is philosophy itself.[35] We cannot move back within the flow of arguments; Werner argues that each *layer* is in some manner superior over the previous. The first half, he asserts, leads to the second half, which in turn leads to something else completely. Therefore, we might conclude that, in Werner's conception, there is no backward transition from rhetoric to the mythic account of *Eros*. I would like to suggest an alternative viewpoint in the following section regarding this particular discussion. If we could argue that the two halves of the dialogue refer to one another in terms of content and form, then we could have a unified text, the two halves of which are constant interaction with each other. Supposing that we develop a reading of *Phaedrus* wherein the dialogue can be understood as a set of suggestions or useful skills on a particular philosophical goal such as persuading an individual, coupled with a few case studies. We could then argue that the first half of the dialogue served one purpose, whereas the other served another. One half could contain the suggestions whereas the other could contain the case

[34] Werner, "Plato's *Phaedrus* and the Problem of Unity", p. 121.

[35] *Ibid.*, p. 122.

studies. Perhaps then we could argue for a purpose for that apparent disunity within the dialogue. As long as the function we would attribute to each part could be laid out in detail, then we could argue for the purpose they might serve, which would also mean the unifying element within the dialogue. The next section will elaborate on Werner's take on supposed purpose of apparent disunity in *Phaedrus*, as well as mein on interpretation of the state of affairs.

3.4 A Possible Solution: Soul-leading by Means of Rhetoric as the Unifying Element

Werner's fundamental hypothesis is that, the disunity that has been the focus of various discussions summarized above could be, in fact, a deliberate choice in Plato's part.[36] The reason why Werner calls this particular approach "strategic" is that it presupposes the discrepancy between the two halves of *Phaedrus* to serve a certain purpose, in accordance with the philosophical point Plato intended to make. Once the average reader experiences the dialogue, he/she might be expected to get an impression of a multi-layered, yet disjointed and disunified dialogue. As Werner speculates, after many consecutive readings, the sudden transition that takes place between the palinode and the rhetorical discussion remains somewhat jarring. The reader's "puzzlement is intentionally encouraged by the author."[37] Werner's argument proposes that such is the intended experience after all, since the sudden shift in theme and tone is supposed to achieve a certain end. Considering the supposed end-goal or agenda that may have lead Plato to employ such a convoluted approach to philosophical writing, Werner proposes two possible, yet not exclusive, answers. The first option is that, the disunified structure of the text proves a point: The dichotomy between madness and philosophy is represented within the text by means of two disjointed halves. Werner observes that the act of myth-making is related to madness within the dialogue: the palinode is an exercise in excessive ecstasy. Rhetoric, in contrast, is presented as the *sober, measured* and *rational* approach to the art of philosophy. When the madness is

[36] Werner, "Plato's *Phaedrus* and the Problem of Unity", p. 129.

[37] *Ibid.*, p. 130.

juxtaposed with sobriety in such fashion, the reader is compelled to question their places in the act of philosophy, as well as within the context of the dialogue.[38] The issue has been referred to in the palinode as well: the charioteer attempts to control two horses representing the two polar opposites of the human soul: moderation and excess. In this way, the philosophical point that the dialogue is making could be that both rational rhetoric and irrational myth-making could be the part of a skillfully practiced philosophy. Furthermore, Werner suggests that the disunity could provide the reader with a meta-commentary about the dialogue itself: In a similar sense with his previous arguments regarding the formal-structural unity, Werner proposes that the disjointed nature of the dialogue informs the reader on the limits of its parts.[39] Each part that makes up the whole dialogue has their own limits and can only serve the integrity of the dialogue in accordance to their capacity. It could be argued that the palinode is an expression of the view that rhetoric does indeed have limits in conveying its message. The sudden end to the mythic theme and tone, Werner asserts, might serve to remind the reader to be mindful of the possible limitations and shortcomings of the irrational element. Perhaps what we are being told with the shift from rhetoric to myth is that myths might be able to work better where rhetoric seems to fail.

What Werner suggests as a possible solution to the problem of unity is not without its merits. Furthermore, all the previous arguments made by Werner and the other scholars remain accurate. I do not intend to deem Werner's views faulty or criticise the personal interpretation he has put forward. Instead, I would like to develop and elaborate on my own take on the problem of disunity *Phaedrus*. The solution I'd like to present in this thesis approaches the question likewise *strategically*. I would like to suggest that the multitude of themes and structural elements in *Phaedrus* might be understood as the expression of a certain philosophical point. Rhetoric seems to be the dominating theme throughout, as many scholar have observed, yet it cannot account for the overwhelming presence of the peculiar mythic narrative on *Eros* in the middle of the

[38] Werner, "Plato's *Phaedrus* and the Problem of Unity", p. 130.

[39] *Ibid.*, p. 131.

dialogue. Likewise, *Eros* seems like the primary subject matter in the first half, whereas it is almost completely missing in the second half. In the light of these, I would like to argue that, the unifying theme of *Phaedrus* is the persuasion or guiding of the soul. *Phaedrus* could be read as a dialogue on how soul's guidance by means of skillfully practiced rhetoric could be made possible. One could observe that the theme of the dialogue has been decided from the get-go: When Socrates meets Phaedrus just outside the city gates, the young man has been reciting a speech by Lysias the orator, whose practice of rhetoric is met with stern criticism in the following pages of the dialogue. The fact that Phaedrus is the chosen interlocutor for this particular dialogue might provide further support for the argument. Depicted in *Phaedrus* as a frivolous young man, Phaedrus was rather well known for the people of Athens. He was infamous for allegedly participating in the profaning of the Eleusinian mysteries in 415 BC.[40] A supposedly secret event that had been hidden from the eyes of the public, the profaning of the mysteries was a series of parodies in which Phaedrus allegedly took part.[41] The backlash from the Athenian society was so harsh in the face of the news of sacrilege, that Phaedrus had to leave the city. Considering his notoriety in the eyes of the Athenian public, Perhaps there is a reason why he might have been chosen as the main character for this dialogue: he is as a misguided soul in dire need of proper education after all. He has also a soul that experiences the divide between moderation and excess as well. If his soul is one part black horse of carnal desires with his openness towards eroticism, he is also one part moderation with his curiosity towards beautifully crafted speeches. When Phaedrus and Socrates cross paths, Socrates is more than willing to lead him away from the likes of Lysias. Throughout the dialogue Socrates is presented as many things: a lover, an unskilled maker of speeches, a myth-maker and an able rhetorician. As Socrates performs his craft on young Phaedrus, we the readers, get to know the tools he utilizes to inspire Phaedrus so that he could lead his soul towards philosophy. At first, he is an unskilled speech-maker who fails to do

[40] Nails, *The People of Plato*, pp.233-4.

[41] Leão, "The Eleusinian Mysteries and Political Timing in the Life of Alcibiades", pp.186-7.

justice to *Eros*. After that, he is a good myth-maker that inspires Phaedrus with awe. Finally, he is the able rhetorician who guides Phaedrus with the art of rhetoric. His approach to philosophy has two main aspects, with each one being represented in each half of the dialogue. The art of rhetoric is discussed in great detail in the second half, whereas the notion of *Eros* is elaborated on in the first half. The fundamental notion that binds the practice of rhetoric to the use of mythic imagery is that, the art of rhetoric has to employ both elements to succeed at reaching out to its audience. We see this particular sense of dedication to both myth and rhetoric in Socrates himself. In the first part of the dialogue, Socrates gradually develops an account for the philosopher's love by means of a fantastically rich mythic story, which is immediately followed by a lengthy discussion on the skills that might be needed for the art of rhetoric. The succession of these elements does not necessarily imply that the conclusions reached in terms of rhetoric are somewhat superior or more accurate in their approach to philosophical truth. Unlike Werner's understanding of the flow of dialogue, I would like to argue that both rhetoric and myth require each other's assistance to function properly. Perhaps a little alteration to the structure of the dialogue may reveal an otherwise unnoticed aspect of the supposed myth-rhetoric interaction within the dialogue. Let us remove the second half of the dialogue and place it before the first half. We should observe that the flow of the dialogue changes dramatically. In this new arrangement, the dialogue begins with an extensive discussion on the practice of rhetoric. Once the skills utilized for the proper practice of the craft have been laid out in detail, we come to the three speeches. The first speech constitute the weakest and the most unimaginative rhetorical speech of the bunch. While Socrates' first speech is an admirable effort and a clear improvement over the previous one, it is not yet good enough. The final speech is a long and beautifully detailed narrative on the nature of *Eros* and the human soul. The big surprise here is that it does not share the same characteristics with the other couple of speeches: It is a clear deviation from the rhetorical style that have been dominating the text up to that point. The conclusion that we might reach is that, the craft of the philosopher is not yet complete without the use of similes and mythic imagery; as if what separates the philosopher from the run-of-the-mill rhetorician is his/her conscious and clever use of myths. Once formulated in

this manner, the discussion regarding the unity of *Phaedrus* should be advanced with a thorough investigation concerning the use of rhetoric and myth in this particular context. The next chapter will lay out the essentials of the discussion and elaborate on the listed items in great detail, in the hopes of giving a reasonable account of the supposed interaction between rhetoric and myth in *Phaedrus*.

CHAPTER 4

SOUL-LEADING AS THE UNIFYING ELEMENT

The observations that have been made in the previous chapter remain true and relevant. The path to follow, then, is to decide on a concept or an idea that could unite the two halves of the dialogue in such a way that the text constitute a meaningful whole. This unifying notion could be the practice of soul-leading by means of rhetoric and myth. The main idea here is that the first half of the dialogue presents us a number speeches that display the examples of rhetorical argumentation or mythic imagery to a varying degree of capacity to persuade. The second half of the dialogue can be understood as an account on the failure or the success of said speeches. The second half is where Socrates provides us with such advice on rhetorical arts that he seems to follow to a varying degree throughout *Phaedrus*. *Phaedrus* is a dialogue in which two different approaches to speech-making in service of soul-leading become the topic of discussion. The first approach is practiced by Lysias the sophist which consists of rhetoric through rational argumentation, and the other one is presented by Socrates by means of both rhetorical arguments and a mythic narrative. The dialogue contains a rather lengthy section in which Socrates presents an account of the skills that might have benefited him in his efforts of persuading Phaedrus. However, there is a substantial piece of mythic narrative in the middle of the text, the presence of which have caused problems regarding the interpretation of the text, as we have discussed in the previous chapter. The question that needs to be answered at this point is how these elements of rhetoric and mythic imagery come into play in guiding Phaedrus towards the way of philosophy. For that purpose we will have to understand what happens within each half of the dialogue. In the following pages I will argue that the first half can be read as a series of rhetorical speeches on the subject matter of *Eros*. In its essence the first half of the dialogue compares and contrasts a sophist's attempt to goad Phaedrus towards a possibly harmful understanding of love with the philosopher's practice of soul-leading. What we also observe within that section of the dialogue is

an example of how skillfully Socrates approaches his interlocutor, and diverts his attention from Lysias' distracting thoughts. We will demonstrate certain samples from the dialogue that could be the key to understanding why first two speeches are considered failures, whereas the last one could be interpreted as a success. Therefore, whereas the first half of the dialogue represents a number of attempts at persuading Phaedrus, the second part could be understood as Socrates' elaboration on why one speech seems to work while the rest look like they have failed. In order to develop my argument in detail, I would like to carry out the discussion in two parts. In the first section I will lay out the basics of the set of skills utilized in the practice of rhetoric as they are described in the second half of the dialogue. After that I will proceed to investigate how the first two speeches might have failed as a result of the misuse of those skills. In the second section, I will take the third speech (the palinode) as a successful attempt at developing a skillfully made speech that could perhaps inspire its audience to moving towards the goal it seems to advocate. After all that, I hope to achieve the conclusion that the skillful practice of persuasion or soul-leading through rhetoric could be argued to be what unites the two halves of the dialogue.

4.1 On the Rhetorical Skills of Socrates in *Phaedrus*

In accordance to the observations documented in the previous chapter, rhetoric constitutes one of the most dominant subject matter throughout *Phaedrus*. Rhetoric is handled throughout a rather substantial portion of the dialogue in two major ways. It's placed in the focus of the discussions regarding its usage and methodology in the second half of the dialogue, and it governs the discussions on *Eros* with its argumentative forms and approaches throughout the first two speeches in the first half. I would like to argue that the second half of the dialogue is where Socrates accounts for the problems that might have occured within the first couple of speeches, as well as the relative success of the third speech in the first half of *Phaedrus*. Our focus in this section, however, will be on the first two speeches that could be described as failures. The first one is the speech made by Lysias, who acts as a opposing case to Socrates' take on the skillful practice of rhetoric with his disregard for the truth of his subject matter. We, as the reader, witness the essential elements of this particular way

of speech-making at the beginning of the dialogue. It reads like a speech designed to convince young Phaedrus to grant favors to Lysias without bothering the orator with the responsibilities of a romantic relationship. Socrates' criticism stems from his observations that the speech is lacking a coherent argumentative structure and a depth to its arguments (235a). After that, Socrates responds to Phaedrus' demands that he too should compose a similar speech, so he comes up with his first speech, employing an approach similar to Lysias'. In his attempt to improve upon Lysias' he reaches a similar result regarding the nature of love. Socrates finds that both of those speeches fail to come close to the truth of the matter. That could be an undesirable outcome: the disregard for truth might become a problem when the orator remains ignorant of the subject matter of his/her speech, since without the guidance of true knowledge, the orator could only produce artless and inferior products of rhetoric (262c). On top of the problems regarding the knowledge about the subject matter, stylistic problems occur when the overall organization of the speech fails to serve its well-being as a unified whole. After all, a skillfully crafted speech must be put together in such a way that each part must contribute to its integrity (264c). My observations have led me to claim that Socrates makes use of three distinct skills that could help the orator with the basics of the skillful practice of rhetoric. I would like to argue that these three skills do not constitute a general set of rules to adhere to. Instead, I would like to suggest that these are the very skills Socrates himself attempts to use in his efforts to persuade Phaedrus. In any case, the language Socrates uses to describe these skills give a certain impression of him giving a few advice on how to approach the issue of persuading individuals through rhetoric. As we will discuss in the following pages, the psychological state of the individual the orator addresses seems quite important for Socrates. Therefore one could argue that these skills do not constitute the absolute pillars of the craft, since each different individual might require the orator to add a few other skills to his arsenal as a speech-maker. In our case Phaedrus is Socrates' sole interlocutor, and Socrates might have adjusted his technique in accordance to that state of affairs. Socrates' advice goes as follows: first, the rhetorician is advised to be thoroughly knowledgeable on the subject matter of his/her speech. Secondly, he/she'd benefit from engaging in one-to-one dialogue with individuals, and getting to know

the characteristics of their souls so that he/she is able to reach certain conclusions or generalizations that could lead him/her to a general understanding of souls. The insight regarding the characteristics of people could provide the orator with the kind of generalizations that could help him/her with similar interactions in the future. Finally, the orator should not forget that the organization of the text should serve to preserve the text's liveliness. At that point, I'd like to argue that the more skillfully Socrates approaches to persuading Phaedrus, the better the resulting speech becomes in fulfilling its purpose. In the following pages, we will attempt to elaborate on the aforementioned skills for the practice of rhetoric. After that, we will investigate the reasons for the failures of the first two speeches on love. Therefore, as the first step of the discussion, we will attempt to elaborate on Socrates' account on how to approach Phaedrus.

4.1.1 On the Skillful Practice of Rhetoric in *Phaedrus*

Throughout the following pages, the reader will come across the idea that rhetoric should be practiced with skill. This notion is related to the discussion in which Socrates argues that rhetoric is an art, and by virtue of being an art, it must be practiced skillfully. The passage that we find this idea is where Socrates argues that in order to persuade people, rhetoric must be practiced "with art":

> Don't you think, my good man, that we have chastised the art of speaking more harshly than need be? Lady Rhetoric might reply perhaps: `Astonishing fellows, what nonsense you speak. I never required anyone to be ignorant of the truth when he learns to speak, but—if my counsel means something—to master the truth and then take me up. But I do make one major claim: without me, in no way will a man who knows the truth be able to persuade with art´ (260d)

The original Greek word is *τέχνη* (*tekhne*), which could be translated as "art, skill or cunning of hand". In his translation of *Phaedrus*, Scully uses the phrase "persuade with art" which could suggest that rhetoric should be practiced skillfully if one wishes

to persuade his/her audience.[42] Waterfield translates the term as "expertise"[43], from which perhaps we could surmise that the orator must adhere to the necessary teachings of his craft. In addition, H. Yunis translates the phrase as "to persuade by means of art" which might also indicate that the persuasion must be done with the use of the set of skills demanded by the orator's craft.[44] Finally, Nehamas and Woodruff translation of the term is "systematic art" which gives a rather strong impression that "art" should be taken as a set of skills that are utilized within a systematic practice. In the light of these views, I would like to suggest that, within the context of *Phaedrus*, rhetoric could be considered an art, and as we could expect from any art, it demands its practitioners that they have developed a few skills to be able to handle their subject matter.

In *Phaedrus* there seems to be a strong distinction between the rhetorical practices of sophists like Lysias (one could also include his historical counterparts such as Gorgias into the discussion), and the rhetorical practices of philosophers such as Socrates.The dialogue sees essential differences within two major aspects of the practice: their supposed goals and the impression they give regarding their approaches to those goals. In terms of the end goals that the sophist and the philosopher have decided for their craft, the sophist would like to sway the opinion of the masses towards his personal profit. For the philosopher figure described within the dialogue, however, his utmost priority seems like inspiring a love and curiosity for philosophy in the souls of his fellow interlocutors. The distinction between these two characters remain the same in terms of the dialogue's understanding of their approach to persuasion. It is hinted in the dialogue that the art of persuasion is utilized as a means of trickery by the sophist. The philosopher, however, takes the persuasion as the purpose of the art of rhetoric, and proposes that a rhetorician should have some grasp on the intricacies of many souls so that his/her skills serve the persuasion efforts more efficiently. Let us take a detailed

[42] Plato, *Phaedrus*, p. 44.

[43] Plato, *Phaedrus*, p. 48.

[44] Plato, *Phaedrus*, p. 181.

look at the difference between the sophist' and the philosopher's conception of persuasion.

When practiced correctly, the rhetorical practice can take on the vast plethora of subject matter in front of the masses as well as individuals (261b). Moss reminds us that Socrates has previously defined rhetoric as an exclusively public matter. For instance in *Gorgias* the supposed audience and the desired outcome of the rhetorical practices are expressed as such: the spoken word primarily aims at gaining political power (*Gorgias*, 452d). The art of rhetoric, as far as Gorgias understands it, is perfectly fit for persuading people of significant status for one's own cause, as well as swaying people's opinions towards wherever the orator likes:

> GORGIAS: I'm talking about the ability to use the spoken word to persuade—to persuade the jurors in the courts, the members of the Council, the citizens attending the Assembly—in short, to win over any and every form of public meeting of the citizen body. Armed with this ability, in fact, the doctor would be your slave, the trainer would be yours to command, and that businessman would turn out to be making money not for himself, but for someone else—for *you* with your ability to speak and to persuade the masses. (*Gorgias*, 452e).

Moss points out that this is in stark contrast to how Socrates conceptualizes the notion of persuasion by means of rhetoric.[45] The skillful persuasive use of rhetoric within the context of *Phaedrus* can be realized in a private environment, since one of the fundamental skills a budding orator is advised to posses is the ability to recognize and understand the numerous quirks and characteristics of individual souls. Furthermore, Moss argues that the desired outcome of each approach to persuasion could be drastically different. Gorgias declares that the main objective of the rhetoric is to gain as much favor as possible within the public life. However Socrates speculates in *Phaedrus* that what lies at the end of the lovers' path is divine bliss (256e). The kind of rhetoric Socrates seems to advocate aims at leading the individual's soul to the path of the philosophy. The true practice of this art could be a blessing for both parties involved in the correspondence:

[45] Moss, "Soul-leading: The Unity of the *Phaedrus*, Again", p. 21.

> . . . I think, to be serious about these things when a person uses the dialectical art and selects an appropriate soul; sowing and planting his speeches with knowledge, speeches which have the means to defend themselves and the one who plants them. These speeches are not fruitless but bear seed from which other speeches, planted in other fields, have the means to pass this seed on, forever immortal, and to make the person possessing them as blessed as is humanly possible. (276e-277a)

A few thing must be said about the notion of persuasion, or as it is called in the dialogue, "soul-leading" (*psychagogia*, 261a, 271d) as well. The act of persuading individuals to a certain cause or an ideal constitutes the strongest theme of *Phaedrus*: the practice of rhetoric is speculated to be the "capacity to guide the soul" (271c). Socrates takes the practice of rhetoric, and the "guiding of souls" as one and the same thing. Earlier in the dialogue, Socrates has defined the art of rhetoric as follows: "Isn't the art of rhetoric, taken as a whole, a certain guiding of souls through words, not only in the law courts and other places of public assembly but also in private?" (261a) There are only two places in *Phaedrus* where the term *soul-leading* (*psychagoge*) is mentioned: The first one being in 261a, and the second one in 271d: "Since the capacity of speech is to guide the soul, someone intending to become a rhetorician must know what forms of the soul possess."(271d) Scully observes a considerable difference in tone between these two uses of the term. He argues that the term is used in a somewhat pejorative sense initially. The language and context, as his argument goes, constitute a loose reference to Aristophanes' *Birds*.[46] Scully refers to the following passage in *Birds*, where the chorus sings:

> Near the land of Shadow-footers
>
> There's a lake where, all unwashed,
>
> Sokrates can conjure souls! (*Birds*, 1555)[47]

This section depicts a scene in the comedy where the character *Peisandros* "yearns to reclaim the soul which left him in the midst of life." The soul in question *Chairephon*

[46] Plato, *Phaedrus*, p. 45.

[47] Aristophanes, *Birds; Lysistrata; Assembly-women; Wealth*, p. 71.

arises from the ground once Socrates slaughters a young camel, and effectively conjures a soul from out of nowhere. Scully argues that the initial use of the term *soul-leading* is reminiscent of the tone of the above-mentioned piece of poetry. The term is used in a negative connotation, as if Socrates would guide the souls as if bewitching them with spells. As Asmis argues, the initial use of *psychagoge* "agrees with the familiar notion of rhetoric as a power that works on the soul and maybe used to deceive it."[48] By the time we come to the second mention of the term *soul-leading*, however, we find that the connotation of the term has changed dramatically. The term now occupies a critically important role in a section wherein Socrates describes and lays out the skills necessary to the philosopher's rhetorical practice. At this point, Socrates describes the soul-leading as the "capacity of speech" and progresses to advise that "someone intending to become a rhetorician must know what forms the soul possesses" (271d). From that point onwards the role of soul-leading becomes inseparable from the skillful practice of rhetoric. Whereas the likes of Lysias beguiles souls and drag them towards their personal agenda, the skillful rhetorician attempts to lead the souls towards divine bliss. In addition, when Socrates claims that for a rhetorician to speak well and beautifully he must have a "discursive understanding of the truth about the subject he means to discuss" (259e), Phaedrus responds by reminding that, as far as some people are concerned, there is no need for the rhetorician to learn what is really right; he just needs to learn what great masses take for right. There is also no need to know what is truly good or beautiful, since they are useless in persuading people. Socrates cannot "cast aside" these thoughts, so he elaborates on the ill-practices of such ignorant speech-makers. When the orator is ignorant of the truth of the subject matter of his speech, yet succeeds to persuade his similarly mis-informed audience on false premises and argumentative tricks, that could result in harm or evil:

> So, when a rhetorician who is mindless of good and evil encounters a city in the same condition and attempts to persuade it . . . by praising evil as good, and by carefully studying public opinion, he persuades the city to do evil things rather than good ones, what sort of fruit do you think this rhetorician would harvest from the seed he has sown? (260c)

[48] Asmis, "Psychagogia" in Plato's *Phaedrus*.", p. 156.

The answer is “not at all a good one” as Phaedrus claims (260d). Furthermore, those who might practice rhetoric without a proper understanding of the truth of the subject matter appear to have made a habit of bending their arguments in accordance to the opposing sides of a given case. Those who practice rhetoric as the likes of Lysias do might argue in favor of the cases that could benefit them the most:

> So, there is argument and counter-argument not only in the courts and places of public assembly but it seems that in all cases of speaking there would be one and the same art of some kind (if indeed it is an art) which enables someone to make everything similar to everything else, provided that things are comparable and able to be compared and, when someone else makes these similarities but hides the fact that he is doing so, to bring this to light. (261d-e)

What is described here is the kind of rhetorical practice that blurs the lines between separate things, and argues both against and in defence of a given case, which we might find in courtrooms and places of public assembly. The kind of rhetorical practice that seems to be described here could be attributed to the sophists of the era. This could be supported by H. Yunis since he observes that “arguing opposite sides of a case was a central achievement of sophistic teaching and practice” and highly influential in Greek culture. The rhetorical practice that Socrates describes here could be suspected to have disregard for the truth of the subject matter, since if it is possible to argue both for and against any case, then the truth seems to lose its importance.

In the following section we will elaborate on the skills Socrates attempts to demonstrate in his attempts to persuade Phaedrus. The first skill is concerned with the orator’s grasp on the knowledge regarding the subject matter. Secondly, the orator should have some insight as to what kind of an individual his/her interlocutor in a private dialogue could be. The final skill is to organize the speech in such a way that its integrity, coherence as well as its liveliness is more or less guaranteed. Let us begin with the first one.

4.1.1.1 Knowledge Regarding the Subject Matter

Socrates suggests that for a rhetorical argument to be persuasive, the rhetorician should possess the truth of his/ her subject matter: “Now, if something is going to be spoken well and properly, the mind of the speaker must know the truth of the matter to be

addressed, mustn't it?" (259e) The quality of a persuasive speech depends on the orator's acceptance that rhetoric is indeed an art. To understand rhetoric as a form of art implicates that the art itself might have certain expectations from the practitioner. The art might demand that the skilled artisan must have some insight regarding the essential knowledge on his/her material (270b). The art of persuasion, the argument goes, should not rely on such impressions that mimic the good or the beautiful for the sake of diverting the masses to the orator's political agenda (260a). What is demanded of the rhetorician is that he/she must have full knowledge of the issues and concepts handled within the speech. Since Socrates acknowledges that rhetoric is indeed the art that is used in guiding souls, it would be unfair to assume that the art of persuasion demands that its practitioners be ignorant of truth (260d). Considering that rhetoric is the practice of guiding the souls i.e. soul-leading, and it is impossible to persuade people without an understanding of the subject matter, then it becomes the orator's duty to endeavor to get a grip on the knowledge regarding the issue at hand. Considering the main topic of discussion in the first half is *Eros*, we could evaluate the merits of those three speeches with reference to their insight on what *Eros* truly could be. As we will observe in the following pages, Lysias and Socrates fail to come up with worthy speeches that do justice to the idea of love. At this point, however, let us say that this two speeches represent failures in being truthful to the notion love.

In the discussion on the methods that will enable the orator to attain his goal, Socrates gives the reader a clear warning about a certain misguided opinion: The tutor should not expect to learn this art from guidebooks on rhetoric (268c). Drawing similarities between rhetoric and medicine, Socrates argues that a person would be mad if he claimed that he considered himself to be a worthy doctor just because he learnt a few treatments from a book. Likewise, a person cannot be expected to excel in the art of rhetoric solely by studying manuals or books on rhetoric. Such books, of which there seem to be numerous examples according to Socrates, are filled to the brim with lists of techniques to convince and manipulate the unsuspecting audience members. Those books are of no use to a proper orator. Socrates has also some advice to give on how to approach to such instances of private interaction. The idea here is that the orator should engage in private dialogue with individuals, hoping to get a glimpse of their

souls. That could inform the orator on what kind of things might affect them and help the orator with his/her efforts to persuade those individuals. Moreover, a rhetorician should also be aware of the limits of his craft at handling the subject matter he/she chooses for him/herself. Putting aside the inherent risk in being uneducated in the subject matter of one's own speech; one must reconsider if the craft that he/she employs even allows the articulation of the subject matter in question. This will be an important topic in the following discussions because we will observe that the initial speeches by Lysias and Socrates do not seem to recognize the problem that their rhetorical arguments may not be the right medium for the truthful handling of their subject matter *Eros*.

4.1.1.2 Knowledge Regarding the Soul of the Interlocutor

Socrates has a few things to say about the audience for the art of rhetoric as well. Phaedrus expresses his surprise when Socrates proposes that the art of rhetoric could be practiced in a private environment as well as in the public circles. In the defense of this claim, Socrates reminds Phaedrus the rhetorical treatises of Nestor and Odysseus, both of which were written in their idle private moments (261b-c). The domain of rhetoric cannot be limited to public settings solely. That is to say, in a similar fashion to the relationship established between an orator and a crowded audience that one expects to find in a political setting, two individuals might engage in a one-to-one correspondence with each other where the art of rhetoric dictates the general outline of such an interaction:

> Isn't the art of rhetoric, taken as a whole, a certain guiding of souls through words, not only in the law courts and other places of public assembly but also in private? Doesn't the same art deal with major and minor matters and is it any more honorable, if correctly employed, when used in serious matters than when used in trivial ones? Or how have you heard these things? (261a-b)

This is where Socrates introduces the second guideline for the art of rhetoric. The budding rhetorician is advised not to shy away from participating in the civic life; he should be out in the streets, mingling with individuals of every walk of life. What he/she should be looking for is genuine one-to-one conversations with individuals.

Within each single person he/she comes across, the orator will gaze upon a new soul; since each new individual is unique and each single encounter demands a fresh approach, he/she will attempt his best to get a feeling of what secrets that the particular person might keep (271e-272a). After each correspondence, the rhetorician will have left with a piece of information regarding the needs of that particular, individual soul. After a number of such interactions, the rhetorician will have gathered enough information that will enable him to develop a set of generalizations regarding people and their characteristics (273e). One by one, the orator will achieve a more or less accurate feel for different kinds of souls and the different techniques and approach that might be required to reach out to them. Each singular encounter with another soul presents the orator with a set of questions that must be answered lest he/she remains ignorant of his/her interlocutor:

> This is how we should speak about the nature of anything whatsoever: first, we should ask whether a nature is simple or multi-formed in regard to which we wish to be artful and to be able to make others artful. Then, if simple, we should consider its natural capacity, that is, what it can do to what, or in what ways it can be acted upon and by what. If it has multiple forms, we must count these and examine each of them as we did when we looked at the simple form: what is its natural capacity to do what to what or to suffer what by what. (270d)

The first question that begs for an answer is whether the individual in question possesses a simple soul, or a multi-formed one. The second important question is concerned with the capacity of a soul to endure and enforce. Each soul possesses a unique nature, which differs from the rest in terms of its vulnerabilities and its capacity to leave a mark on things. The rhetorician's duty is to combine his/her knowledge on different kinds of speeches with the knowledge and insights regarding the types of souls people possess (271b). Each individual soul presents the orator with a set of characteristic features that needs to be considered lest the orator might fail his/her attempts at composing a speech that addresses the needs of the individual in question. A particular speech that has an enchanting effect on one soul, might prove to be utterly ineffective in convincing another individual. Therefore, it seems important for Socrates that, each particular speech must be catered to the particular needs of each singular individual: ". . . having classified the different kinds of speeches and kinds of

soul and how these are affected, he (the orator) will go through every cause, aligning each type of speech to each type of soul, explaining the reason why one soul is necessarily persuaded by speeches of a certain sort and another is not." (271b) The orator depends on his/her knowledge and insight regarding the nature of the individual case at hand, as well as the subject matter in order to be able to make such a critical decision. Generalizations produced from singular cases, as it is argued, could help the orator get ever so slightly closer to an accurate insight on the human spirit, since they might direct the orator on how he/she should approach the next individual that he/she will attempt to persuade (271d-272b).

4.1.1.3 Organic Composition of the Speech

Socrates' third and final advice for the probable success of a rhetorical speech is that a rhetorician should organize his/her speeches in such a way that they constitute a whole as if a living creature: "But I suspect that you would say this at least: every speech like a living creature should be put together with its own body so that it is not without a head or without a foot but has a middle and extremities, written in such a way that its parts fit together and form a whole." (264c) Each part must occupy the place it is supposed to, engaged in interaction with the other parts and the whole. Each element has been designed to undertake a certain task according to the overall agenda of the speech, and their unity should be realized in an organized manner. The pieces of the text are to be brought together in such an organic manner that, each element is enabled to perform their particular function to the fullest extent (264c). Socrates likens rhetorical speech to a living organism, for which the proper organization of its parts ensures its well being. We could arguably interpret this analogy to a living creature as representing the adaptive qualities of the speech. McCoy agrees that the emphasis on the "liveliness" of the speech and the similarities drawn between the speech and living beings reflect the view that "a speech must seem to be `alive´ to its audience". To be alive could be understood as the speech's ability to adapt to the shifting circumstances of the moment. A live speech constitutes an organic whole: it is capable of delivering immediate responses to the ever-changing conditions under which the orator

performs.[49] Its malleability ensures that the speech can adapt and respond to the needs of each new encounter, re-imagining and re-configuring the style through which it delivers its message. In case of Phaedrus, for instance, Lysias' speech and Socrates' first attempt are without success, since we later see that the kind of speech that truly excites and fascinates Phaedrus represents a fantastic and mythical take on the notion of *Eros*. Right after Socrates finishes his palinode full of mythic imagery, Phaedrus expresses his utmost fascination (257c). The reaction from Phaedrus demonstrates that once an insight regarding the characteristics of the individual in question has been reached, a capable speech-maker can bend and adept his/her style of rhetoric to suit the needs of that particular individual. The dry and humourless style of Lysias might seem to be effective in convincing Phaedrus initially. Yet, when Socrates discovers what kind of speeches might truly leave their mark on the young man, he switches to a decidedly mythical interpretation of love right on the spot, adapting his narrative and style accordingly, which results in success. At this point, we should investigate and lay out the critical faults in the first two speeches by Lysias and Socrates that caused failure in their attempts.

4.1.2 On the Malpractice of Rhetoric

In the following pages, I would like to elaborate on those two speeches and attempt to understand why they might have failed as examples of skillful rhetoric. I would like to argue that the fundamental reason behind their failure is that they both are limited by the conceptual and argumentative boundaries of reason. At this point we should reintroduce the notion of the sophist's rhetoric. The first two speeches of the first half of *Phaedrus* are speeches composed in the style of rhetoric practiced by sophists. They rely solely on their argumentative strength. As we will elaborate with detail in the next section of this chapter, the skillful and truthful articulation of *Eros* defies the boundaries of reason. The rational language of the sophist's rhetoric cannot do justice to it. What is even worse is that Lysias does not seem to know what love truly is. He is oblivious to the blessing love can bring to one's life, as it is explained by Socrates

[49] McCoy, *Plato on the Rhetoric of Philosophers and Sophists*, p. 170.

in the palinode. Secondly, in both speeches the orators approach Phaedrus as a sophist would approach to the masses he hopes to persuade: they favor their own profit above all else. In the first speech Lysias wants Phaedrus for himself. In the second speech Socrates displays a similar attitude in his refusal of love. The problem here is that their speeches lack any regard for Phaedrus or the conditions that make him. Not only the sophistry of Lysias does not understand the needs of the person he addresses, he cannot devise the proper speech that could inspire him either. In a similar manner, both speeches end up lacking a sense of liveliness, since their disregard for the truth of the subject matter and Phaedrus, coupled with the stiffness of their rational argumentation render them unable to adapt to the changing dynamics of the dialogue. In the light of these arguments, let us begin with Lysias' speech.

4.1.2.1 Lysias' Speech

Lysias exemplifies certain inclinations and approaches in the kind of speech-making that Socrates finds troublesome in the few first pages of *Phaedrus*. First of all, after the first two speeches have already delivered, it is evident to Socrates that Lysias is deeply misinformed about the subject matter of his speech, since he deems Lysias' interpretation of *Eros* to be irreverent (243d). Whereas Lysias has depicted the affection from the lover as a nuisance, Socrates believes that love is in fact a divine thing:

> SOCRATES: What else? Don't you believe that Eros is a god, the son of Aphrodite?
>
> PHAEDRUS: So it is said, to be sure.
>
> SOCRATES: But not so for Lysias, at any rate, nor for your speech, which was delivered through my mouth while I was drugged and under your spell. But if Eros exists, as in fact he does, whether as a god or at least something divine, he could not be bad in any way, although both speeches spoke just now as if he were. (242d-e)

Lysias sticks to a certain argumentative style throughout the speech and does not deviate from it. His usage of purely rational terms of argumentation would be key to his success at persuading Phaedrus. As we have discussed it previously, the sophist uses his rational arguments as if a magician bewitches his prey. They are indispensable

tools of his trade: without them he would not be able to sway people's will towards his own gain. Secondly, we can surmise that Socrates deems Lysias to be ignorant of the essential characteristics of the person whom he addresses with his speech as well. When Phaedrus eventually confesses that Lysias's speech "seemed second-rate by comparison", it also means that he has not been able to produce the kind of speech that could truly impress and perhaps persuade Phaedrus. Since Lysias is depicted to care only for his own profit, and the sole means by which he can achieve that goal is rational arguments, he could not help but fail at articulating an element that is irrational in its nature. The lack of "liveliness" in his speech is further proof for the stiffness in his rationale, which brings us to the last point. The speech by Lysias does not even abide by the third condition of a well-made piece of rhetoric: it lacks proper arrangement of its parts. The organization of his arguments are off as he does not begin where he should. Lysias, as Socrates relates, begins his arguments with the conclusion he means to reach. Socrates even comments that the rhetorician wrote as if "the speech were poured out in a heap" (264b). Indeed, there does not seem to be a logically necessary progression to Lysias' arguments in his speech. What Lysias does in his speech is to list a number of reasons why the lover's affection might be harmful, with each one beginning with a phares like "besides" or "and another thing", without any regard for the organization of the speech.

4.1.2.2 Socrates' First Speech

Socrates' initial response to Lysias' speech prompts young Phaedrus to ask for a new rhetorical speech of similar style and subject matter; Socrates complies with that demand. This rhetorical speech reaches a similar conclusion in comparison to that of Lysias': Love is a form of sickness, a madness (241c). However, Socrates is not particularly satisfied with this interpretation of *Eros*: He has been unjust to him (242d). Phaedrus has forced him to deliver a speech similar in tone and argument to Lysias' (236b), yet the end product has proven to be gravely untruthful of this divine being. In the lines where he blames Lysias for disrespecting *Eros*, Socrates counts himself as an accomplice, sharing the guilt of slandering about love: "But if Eros exists, as in fact he does, whether as a god or at least as something divine, he could not be bad in any

way, although *both speeches* spoke just now as if he were." (242d-e). Perhaps Socrates' mannerisms and his supposed regret for his speech is just a ruse; an example of the Socratic irony. Nevertheless, it carries some significance. Socrates' first speech similar to Lysias' in spirit: they both rely solely on the rational language of rhetoric. They are both composed by means of a series rational arguments that are linked together by logical reasoning. The nature of their subject matter love, however, defies reason since it represents a thoroughly irrational mode of being. This is the point that we realize that Lysias' way of approaching the subject matter of *Eros* cannot possibly yield acceptable results. The problem with those speeches are that they do not do justice to the truth of *Eros*, as the rational language of the sophist's rhetoric cannot possible account for the lunacy love inspires in individuals. The most they could do is to portrait love as a terrible illness, when it should be honored and celebrated in speech instead. The claim that love is, in its essence, a harmful thing remains embedded in his argument. Furthermore, he appears to have misunderstood Phaedrus as well, since this speech too has been composed within the rational form of argumentation Lysias has employed. Phaedrus remains particularly quiet right after the first speech by Socrates ends. He suspends his judgment on the speech until the next one, the palinode, finishes. When the palinode comes to end, as we have seen, Phaedrus is absolutely amazed by its colorful narrative. To summarize, both speeches could be considered failures for the reasons stated above: they are not faithful to the truth of *Eros*, they do not seem to understand the right kind of rhetoric that could truly impress Phaedrus and at least in case of Lysias' speech, the text display poor organization.

Now, there is another speech on *Eros* left to discuss and it is the palinode (243e-257b). As it has been stated before, the dialogue seems to suggest that this last speech is the one that could at last do justice to the notion of love. In order to understand how that could be the case, we should investigate the palinode in detail. The question that needs to be answered is how the speech that is full of irrational elements and fantastic depictions could be the one that could do justice to *Eros*. The fundamental problem with the previous speeches is that they have been composed within the boundaries decided by rational argumentation of rhetoric. In those speeches Socrates acts as if he is a sophist like Lysias. There is not much to differentiate their approach to persuasion

through rhetoric. He does not seem to demonstrate the skills expected in a well made speech that could lead the souls. The third speech is where things change. The skills find their application within the speech. The strict argumentative style of the sophist's rhetoric has been disposed of. Even Phaedrus seems to have enjoyed it the most. What we have is arguably the philosopher's practice of rhetoric. I would like to argue that we owe all of that to the introduction of mythic imagery into the speech-making practice. In the next section, an attempt will be made to demonstrate how Socrates have composed the palinode in accordance with the previously stated advisory guidelines and the help of mythic imagery.

4.2 Skillful Soul-leading in Practice: The Palinode

The first two speeches could not satisfy Socrates with their handling of the subject matter *Eros*. As it has been stated above, those pieces of rhetoric have failed to grasp the knowledge regarding their subject matter, failed to assess the intellectual and characteristic needs of Phaedrus and they were not composed in an organic and lively manner. As we have already addressed in the previous section, the palinode represents the final speech on the topic of *Eros*. I believe it is safe to speculate that the mythic story within the palinode constitutes the most skillful of all three speeches on that subject matter, since that is the last time where *Eros* has been mentioned explicitly. Even if we cannot argue with absolute certainty that the palinode contains all that can be said on *Eros*, it could nevertheless represent Socrates' best effort at tackling that subject matter within the context of *Phaedrus*. Socrates himself deems it to be his "finest and most beautiful palinode within (his) powers" (257a). Phaedrus states that he is quite love-struck with the palinode: "But for some time now I have been astonished by your speech, considering how much more beautifully you turned this speech than the first one. It's actually made me anxious lest Lysias seems second-rate by comparison." (257c) It is also asserted by Socrates that, coupled with the discussion rhetoric that takes place in the second half of the dialogue, the palinode is an exemplary piece of speech-making that could challenge the poems of Homer himself: "If Homer (and any other author of poetry, whether accompanied or unaccompanied by music) has written from a position of knowledge of how things truly are, and if he can mount

a defence when challenged on the content of his work, then he should be called a philosopher, a lover of wisdom (*Phaedrus*, Waterfield, 278c).

In the light of the previous failures, Socrates decides that a new approach is called for to speak artfully about *Eros*. What needs to be done in the first place is to elaborate on the nature of love, so that the following discussion can be built upon a solid foundation. This new approach requires him to be knowledgeable of the subject he means to talk about. He should also demonstrate awareness regarding what kind of speech would be best suited to address Phaedrus. Socrates begins his speech with a detailed description of *Eros*. Only then, he proceeds to narrate the story of the soul. The myth does not begin before the proper definitions have not been given. In the following pages I will endeavor to elaborate on the kind of soul represented by the character of Phaedrus. After that, we will speculate on the part the mythic imagery seems to play within the palinode so that perhaps we could make a bit more sense of it.

4.2.1 The Philosopher's Practice of Rhetoric

If we could demonstrate that Socrates has accurate insight towards Phaedrus that could provide him with enough clues for composing a speech suited for his needs, then we could argue that the palinode adheres to the aforementioned advice on rhetoric as well. As far as Socrates is concerned, people possess a vast variety of souls with vastly different characteristics (271d). People vary greatly; each individual is decidedly different from the other. Given this observation, the reason dictates that each unique soul will have unique spiritual demands: Each soul requires a unique approach when it comes to persuasion, so the orator's task is to approach each individual with a unique method and narrative, custom-tailored to his/her needs:

> "Only when he (the orator) is able to explain sufficiently what type of person is persuaded by what type of speech and he has the ability to perceive and to determine for himself in the case of an individual he meets that he is this type of person and his nature is the very type that he heard about in school, and now that he finds himself in front of this man, he must apply these particular words in that particular way to persuade him of these things (271e-272a)."

At this point we should take a closer look at the distinction Socrates makes between simple and complex souls. This separation that Socrates speculates about at 270d is articulated clearly in the following section where he discusses that the rhetorician should arrange and compose his/her speeches towards the capabilities or ailments of any given individual soul, "discovering the form that fits each nature, and accordingly makes and arranges his speech, supplying intricate or multi-colored speeches, covering all the harmonic modes for an intricate or multi-colored soul and supplying simple speech for a simple soul (277b-c)." A simple soul with its simplistic needs gets a likewise simplistic treatment, whereas a multi-colored or complex soul should be given a speech that suits its intricacies. Scully speculates about the meaning of the terms "simple" and "complex". He refers to two particular passages within the dialogue. He observes that at 277c the distinction between complex and simple souls are described with the terms *poikile* which means dappled or many colored which is contrasted by the word *haple* which Scully translates as "simple". Scully points out that the word *haple* can also be found at 230a. Socrates uses the word to contrast the hundred-headed Typhon to its counterpart: "For me, the question is whether I happen to be some sort of beast even more complex in form and more tumultuous than the hundred-headed Typhon, or whether I am something simpler and gentler; having a share by nature of the divine and the unTyphonic." (230a) Scully asserts that the adjective *haple* is used "to contrast tamer, simpler beings with a share of divinity in them from wilder, polymorphic creatures.[50] If we bring together these observations with the story told in the palinode, we could reach the conclusion that simple souls would have had horses that were tamer and acted more in moderation compared to wild and unruly horses of the complex souls. In addition to that the expression that simple souls "having a share by the nature of the divine" could also mean that these have been the souls who could see more of the True Being before their fall to the Earth. In contrast, the "dappled" and multi-colored souls could be the ones whose horses were wild and disobedient to the orders of reason and moderation. Now since the advice Socrates gives suggests that the tutor's approach is dictated by the nature of the pupil, one could argue that the

[50] Plato, *Phaedrus*, p. 60.

success of any attempt to convince a person through use of rhetoric depends on the theme and the style of the speech to be delivered to the listener. Its style is expected to match the complexity or the simplicity of the individual soul in question. In other words, the content and the style of the speech should be adjusted to the individual's psychological status or the capacity, which could be an indication of their ties with the divinity or their predisposition to reason. The theme could be picked according to their interests, as well as the style, which could reflect their limits or preferences. We could surmise that a simple and "unTyphonic" soul could be approached with a method that inspires moderation, whereas the complex soul could be approached with a theme their "Typhonic" nature enjoys the most.

Going back to the dialogue, we immediately observe that the theme that entices young Phaedrus the most is love, since the theme of *Eros* is placed firmly as the main theme of all three speeches that seek to persuade Phaedrus. Indeed, Phaedrus is presented in the dialogue as someone erotically attuned. He is depicted as a creature of carnal desire. Not only Socrates addresses him with words of romantic affection on some occasions such as "my love" and "darling boy" (228 d, also Scully p.133-4), he even confesses that he is a "very beautiful young man" who "had a great number of lovers" (237b). Given these observations, the matters of love would be arguably one of the best subject matters to approach Phaedrus with. Therefore, as Nehamas and Woodruff agrees, the theme of *Eros* is settled for the aforementioned speeches[51]. Moreover, Phaedrus is, in accordance with Moss' observation[52], by all means a *multi-colored* soul. What we mean by that particular observation is that his soul finds its expression both in excess and a hunger for satisfying its desires, and a great curiosity towards sophisticated things such as rhetorical speeches which could be a sign of his predisposition to rational arguments as well. Socrates describes Phaedrus in the dialogue as a man who is so much in love with speeches that he means to "speak, even by force, if no one wanted to listen (228c)." He enjoys talking about love, which is the

[51] Plato, *Phaedrus*, p.xli.

[52] Moss, "Soul-leading: The Unity of the *Phaedrus*, Again", p. 27.

very topic he has been listening a speech about before he even meets Socrates. Phaedrus is human after all. Sometimes he might yield to the black horse and delve into carnal desires, whereas some other time he might find himself attracted to noble ideas like self-possession and pursuit for wisdom as we have seen in the palinode.

These could be the very observations that pushes Socrates to utilize a poetic language; a style that is fitting to the needs of his young pupil. A soul so much in tune with the notion of love should be approached with a praise for *Eros*. The question then becomes how is one supposed to do that? The answer in the case of a complex soul such as Phaedrus seems to be the mythic narrative. Ferrari is also in agreement with our observations, arguing that Plato is observant of the fact that discursive arguments alone cannot provide Socrates with the tools that could help him enlist his interlocutor to his cause. Solution is that he has to "recourse to the persuasive power of the example."[53] Unlike the speech by Lysias that simply lists what could await a beloved if he presented his lover with sexual favors, Socrates conjures up a mythic world in which he places a narrative about the soul's journey. The colorful imagery seems to accomplish what dry rhetoric fails. In any case, once the palinode ends, Socrates must confess that it has been Phaedrus who left him no choice but to resort to mythic imagery in his speech: "This, my dear Eros, is the finest and most beautiful palinode within my powers. I offer it to you in atonement. If my phrasing and other things have been rather poetical, understand that Phaedrus has forced them upon me." (257a) Socrates reshapes his rhetoric style into the form of the myth, so that this particular speech could be tailored to suit Phaedrus' soul: His colorful, multi-faceted soul requires no less than a tale as colorful and imaginative as the palinode; otherwise it would not yield to Socrates' tutorage.

4.2.2 Function of Myth within the Palinode

So far we have attempted to differentiate between the rhetorical practices of sophists, and soul-leading efforts of the philosophers. As we have already stated, the sophist's approach to rhetoric is vastly different from the philosopher's endeavors. In *Phaedrus*,

[53] Ferrari, *Listening to the Cicadas*, p. 38.

the palinode contains the most significant piece of speech-making that could be the key difference between those two approaches. It is the mythic narrative, and it could make it possible that the palinode is the most persuasive speech on *Eros* among its peers. It's presence could mean Socrates' expertise in crafting a convincing speech on love that could truly impress Phaedrus. In this section I would like to elaborate on the mythic narrative within the palinode and try to figure out the purpose it might serve within the dialogue. First of all, the mythic or poetic images have always been used in speech-making. The similes or illustrative narratives they provide might help the orators in their attempt to communicate their message. It would not be so out of place to argue that the reason behind Socrates' use of myth in his speech could simply be to make things easier for him to comprehend. It could simply serve a pedagogical function. Perhaps rather more significantly, the myth in *Phaedrus* could be the expression of one's search for their own true nature. Once the individual could determine the nature of his own soul, the story suggests that he could decide to pursue wisdom inspired by the beauty of the beloved.

The possibilities of mythic narrative in supporting the persuasion efforts have been noted and commented on by a variety of personalities from the antiquity. As Asmis observes, myths have been understood as being akin to magic or illusion in the sense that they too charm or bewitch the audience towards the *logos* of the rhetorician.[54] Isocrates, for instance, advises that rhetoricians should make use of the general notion of soul-leading in their treatises on speech-making. In *To Nicocles*, Isocrates suggests that once the argumentative points are presented in the poetic form like Homer did, it might help with the audience's reception. Afterall, the mythic imagery is pleasant to ears and it addresses the imagination of the audience. In times when the orators must abstain from utilizing rational discourse, they "must say the kind of things which they see are most pleasing to the crowd (Isocrates, *To Nicocles*, 46-49)". Furthermore, in *Evagoras,* Isocrates elaborates on the plethora of tools that are available to the poets. Isocrates argues that in terms of creating a eulogy, perhaps similar to one that is

[54] Asmis, "Psychagogia in Plato's *Phaedrus*", p. 156.

composed for *Eros* in *Phaedrus*, the means that are provided to the art of rhetoric turn out to be rather insufficient. Poetry, however, is blessed with such embellishments of the language that they can represent and narrate divinity with great ease: ". . . they (poets) can treat of these subjects not only in conventional expressions, but in words now exotic, now newly coined, and now in figures of speech, neglecting none, but using every kind with which to embroider their poesy." (*Evagoras* 7-10) If the message cannot be delivered by means of the rational language of rhetoric; it should be appreciated through similes, illustrations or fantastical images. This could be one of the reasons why Socrates presents Phaedrus a mythic story: it is the kind of narrative that could address the characteristics or needs of his soul. When the palinode is finished Socrates confesses that the reason he has come up with the story is no other than Phaedrus himself (257a). The confession stems from the observations made above that the use of myth in discursive arguments gives the impression that the rhetorician is trying to trick his/her audience into his/her own case. Myth presents the audience a colorful story about their favorite themes utilizing a rich and entertaining language, which sounds as if it is a method to mislead the audience rather than guide them by means of truth. This seems to be a similar approach to the philosopher's understanding of persuasion. The necessity to devise a "lively" speech requires Socrates to adapt his style and the content of his speech. Regrettably, Socrates does not have many alternatives, since his interlocutor is an individual of such complex or "tumultuous" nature that he needs the power of the example to be guided by the philosopher.

In addition to that, Socrates provides explicit commentary on how the mythic narratives within *Phaedrus* should be approached, quite early in the dialogue. There is a particular section in the dialogue in which Socrates explains what needs to be looked for within a mythic story. Almost like an early warning, the section in question comes even before the speech by Lysias is recitated. It is the myth of Boreas for which Socrates comments that some interpreters of the story have a tendency to rationalize its elements with physical explanations (229d). Once a person begins with his/her attempts to rationalize the mythical/ poetic characteristics of a given story, one could never exhaust the vast repertoire of fantastic oddities generations of myth-making have produced. More importantly, such efforts will be pointless, since they do not work

towards understanding the underlying ideas the story might have. As far as Socrates is concerned, what should be looked for in a story such as the myth of Boreas or the winged charioteer is any clue or information regarding one's true self. Reminding us of the Delphic inscription, Socrates finds it ridiculous to speculate on the truth of works of fiction whereas the truth of the self remains unknown. The question that needs to be answered is what kind of a soul a person possess: "For me, the question is whether I happen to be some sort of beast even more complex in form and more tumultuous than hundred-headed Typhon, or whether I am something simpler and gentler, having a share by nature of the divine and the unTyphonic." (230a) There might not be much use in coming up with genius interpretations of the story unless it can provide people with an essential clue to what kind of a soul they might possess. Furthermore, the insight regarding the nature of one's own soul could have a pivotal importance as far as the narrative of the palinode is concerned. In the story of the winged charioteer, souls that fall from the heavens find their mortal shells in accordance to how much of the True Being they were able to behold. Those souls who could see the true beauty for themselves for the longest end up being lovers of wisdom in this world. Socrates describes a hierarchy of souls where the philosopher occupies the top position and the rest is put into order by the virtue of having witnessed the beauty of the True Being (248 c-e). Once a person could determine his/her place in the hierarchy of the souls, perhaps that could inspire him/her to search for the beauty in this world. Perhaps he/she would find it a necessity to stay clear of hasty satisfaction of carnal desires, and push themselves towards moderation and self-possession. In doing so, perhaps they would introduce themselves to the path of the philosopher. After all, the story itself seems to promise a great reward for such efforts: to continue their journey in heavens, being able to see the face of the true beauty once again.

Previously we have stated that Socrates advises those who wish to become rhetoricians to have grasped the truth of their subject matter (259e). We have also argued that the first couple of speeches on the nature of the love should be considered unsuccessful because of their neglect for the skills Socrates points out to in the second half of the dialogue. Furthermore we have also set out the argue whether Socrates follows his own advice and attempts to develop a discourse in which truth of *Eros* can be referred to.

At this point in the discussion we have to assert that while being a clear improvement over the previous attempts, the palinode regrettably fails to grasp or articulate the truth its subject matter *Eros* in its entirity. The reason behind this particular state of affairs is Phaedrus. As we have observed in the previous section Phaedrus possesses a multi-colored soul. This means that he demonstrates a thirst for bodily pleasures and excess, as well as an admiration for rhetorical speeches of the sophists. Right after he finishes reciting Lysias' speech, Phaedrus expresses his fascination by the orator's writing, calling it to be "extraordinary, both in its language and in other regards." (234c) Yet, when the palinode is introduced to him, he favors the mythic story over Lysias' speech. (257c) The simple fact that he initially adores Lysias' speech and yet proceeds to favor the mythic story of the palinode could be read as indicative of the struggle or the discord the two horses of his soul experience. He is still a young man whose complex and wild soul could still fall for the tricks of the sophists.

Let us remember the hierarchy of the souls described in the palinode. When the souls fall from the heaven into the earth, each one of them finds itself in a physical body (248c). The union of the soul and the physical body results in a living creature. What that creature will turn out to be depends on the soul's vision of the True Being before its descent towards the earth (248d). Socrates proposes a sort of hierarchy about this matter. For instance the soul that has witnessed the truth of the True Being the most among its peers turn out to be a lover of wisdom, a philosopher: "Being the most in heaven shall be planted into the seed of someone who will become a lover of wisdom, or a lover of beauty, or of something musical and erotic." (248d) The rest is put into order according to that same criterion. Socrates lists nine types of souls within that order. The philosopher is on the top of the list. Poets or other people "concerned with imitation" however are on the sixth spot (248e). The sophist or the demagogue is listed on the eighth spot, positioned right above the tyrant who occupies the bottom of the hierarchy. That suggests that Socrates conceives a substantial difference among these three types of souls on the ground of their insight for the truth. From that point, we could surmise that the product of the poet's trade could be in higher esteem with reference to its insight on truth in comparison to the sophist's trade. In that view, the palinode could be deemed an improvement over Lysias' speech since it just might be

a little bit more truthful. Comparing the philosopher's craft to the poet's trade yields a different result. In that comparison the poet's grasp on truth seems feeble and insignificant in the presence of the philosopher.

The question then becomes how is Socrates' practice of soul-leading on Phaedrus supposed to be the practice of the philosopher, if the mythic narrative is inferior with respect to its distance to truth. Indeed, Socrates is not at all happy with the fact that he had to approach his interlocutor with a mythic story. After the palinode is finished, he says these words:

> This, my dear Eros, is the finest and most beautiful palinode within my powers. I offer it to you in atonement. If my phrasing and other things have been rather poetical understand that Phaedrus has forced them upon me. . . If in the former speech Phaedrus and I said anything that shocked you, find fault with Lysias, father of the speech, and stop him from making such speeches; rather turn him toward a love of wisdom. . . Do this so that his lover here, Phaedrus, may also stop going in two directions as now, but devote his life solely to Love with wisdom-loving speeches. (257a-b)

Socrates understands his offense that he has to resort to a mythical story in order to appeal to Phaedrus' sensibilities. Clearly Phaedrus is no philosopher, or his soul is not all that simple and tame either. The discourse that could appeal to a much more moderate and wisdom-loving individual could not work on Phaedrus. Therefore Socrates has to conjure up all those fantastic images because the person sitting across him has just been fascinated by the speech of a sophist, almost the lowliest of the souls according to Socrates' own account. The situation may not be as dire as it seems. Socrates states in the following pages that with the image of the erotic experience he has offered he might have "touched upon a truth in some instances and in others were wide the mark." (265b). The story has not been a complete failure over its claim to truth; there has been some accuracy to what it might have said. This product of the philosopher-poet's craft is not so far removed from the truth in comparison to the previous efforts of the sophists. In fact, the palinode is in one sense a success because it enables Socrates to carry Phaedrus a few steps upwards in the hierarchy of the souls. He might even have opened the door for Phaedrus to the path of self-knowledge which might one day lead him toward the love of wisdom. Now, that he can appreciate the

poet's account of the truth of Eros perhaps he could stop "going in two directions" and abandon his appreciation for the untruthful attempts of persuasion by sophists.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

To conclude the observations and the points we have made so far, we must re-formulate the framework within which we have developed our case for the unity of *Phaedrus*. The problem lies within the observation that *Phaedrus* possesses such structural and thematic features that the integrity or unity of the text seems to be forfeit. The dialogue, as it has been pointed out for many generations of scholars and readers, display a substantial division of theme and structure. As we have already discussed, the text can be considered as having two distinct parts: the first part is where there are three separate speeches on the nature of love, whereas the second part is concerning the art of rhetoric. Furthermore, the last speech in the first half of the dialogue contains a rather detailed mythic story, which represents a substantial exception within a dialogue that is otherwise utilizes the rational argumentative style of rhetoric. The fact that the dialogue contains two dramatically distinct subject matters, as well as certain formal discrepancies has undoubtedly attracted the attention of many scholars who have attempted to devise their own interpretation for the issue throughout generations. As we have discussed in the second chapter, certain viewpoints argued for different manner, in which the unity within the text might have been accomplished. When we go as far as the earliest scholars that occupied themselves with the dialogue, we observe that there are substantial differences between scholars in their approach to the dialogue. For instance, Hermogenes represents the view point for which the unity of a given text could be guaranteed as long as certain formal elements are present. By this point of view, a Platonic dialogue such as *Phaedrus* could be considered unified, as it possesses a coherent dramatic structure. However, Iamblichus, who was one of the first known scholars to have commented on *Phaedrus*, speculated that the notion of beauty provided the bridge between two seemingly unrelated halves of the dialogue. In modern times, the discussion revolves around a few themes such as rhetoric, and

Eros, as well as certain formal or structural parallels that are at display in both halves of the text. This thesis attempts to provide an alternative view by examining and elaborating on a rather less popular argument that the notion of "soul-leading" could be understood as the unifying element.

To summarize the discussions that have taken place so far in the thesis, we have attempted to suggest a solution to the problem of unity within *Phaedrus*. At first, we have tried to give an overview of the dialogue in the first chapter. In this overview we have put some emphasis on a selection of discussions that take place in the dialogue. Since it has been our main objective to argue for the unity of Phaedrus by means of the practice of soul-leading through rhetorical arts and myth-making, we have limited our attention to the certain aspects of the dialogue that are in direct relation to the issue at hand. Therefore, in summarizing the content of the dialogue, we have opted to take into consideration the three speeches that have been composed on the nature of love. Firstly, we have examined the speech by Lysias and have decided that it lacked a coherent argumentative structure. Secondly, we have gone over Socrates' first speech and we have found it to be a failure in creating a skillfully-made speech as well. After that, we have investigated the palinode and made a few critical observations. First, it has been a substantial deviation from the argumentative style of the previous speeches: it has been essentially a major mythic narrative hailing *Eros* as a blessing to the soul. The other observation that has been critical in our discussion is that it is the last speech that takes love as its subject matter. If we take a look at how Socrates and Phaedrus react to it, we could argue that it has been the best of the three speeches. That has brought us to the second set of discussions that we have emphasized in this thesis. We have perceived the second half of the dialogue as primarily the section where Socrates delivers a number of conditions that might prove to be useful in practicing soul-leading on individuals. We have summarized those as follows: the rhetorician should know the truth of his/her subject matter. He/she must have some understanding on the multiplicity of individuals, and should be able to grasp the essential characteristics and needs of the person he/she addresses with his/her speech. Finally, the rhetorician should make sure that the organization of his/her speech is kept alive and it can adapt to the changes that might take place throughout the correspondence.

In the next chapter we have summarized the major approaches in dealing with the problem of disunity in *Phaedrus*. First, we have discussed the need to find a unifying element for the dialogue, and argued that the text itself expresses that a piece of written or spoken speech should have some coherent organization. We have also introduced a series of counter arguments to that viewpoint. We have examined that these arguments essentially suggested there has been a certain unity within the dialogue all along. This viewpoint has also asserted that when most of the readership of *Phaedrus* speak of unity, what they truly mean is thematic unity which means that there must be one primary theme that remains dominant within the entirety of the dialogue. Heath has argued that this viewpoint has had certain anachronistic tendencies, since the contemporaries of Plato did not really care if the text contained multiple themes. Their aesthetic sensitivities, as Heath has argued, expected unity within a literary text such as *Phaedrus* that it had a coherent dramatic form. He has asserted that the simple fact that *Phaedrus* had a distinct beginning, a middle part, and an ending meant all the unity they expected to see. Following that we have decided to investigate the claims of thematic unity. As we have stated previously, there have been two major themes within *Phaedrus* that could arguably be the primary subject matter: rhetoric and *Eros*. Each of these have been defended by a number of arguments. The most obvious reason for the rhetoric to be the unifying principle of *Phaedrus* would be its constant presence within the dialogue. For instance, in the first half we have been presented with rhetorical speeches. The discussions between those speeches have the art of rhetoric as their common theme. The second half of the dialogue is almost exclusively about rhetoric. Yet, one thing that rhetoric as the unifying element cannot account for is the presence of *Eros*. That brings us to the other contender for the dialogue's primary theme. *Eros* occupies such a critical place in the dialogue that any thematic explanation that does not account for its place in the dialogue loses its strength. However, in a similar manner, *Eros* too cannot account for the heavy presence of rhetoric throughout the text. The next approach in question has been the non-thematic approach. This line of argument suggests that formal or dramatic elements provide unity for the dialogue. Certain elements of drama such as coherence of plot, persistent characters, and the fact that the dialogue has a beginning, a middle part, and an end are argued to be the

evidence for the formal unity of the dialogue. Finally, we have come to the strategic approach. This final approach asserts that the experience of jarring disunity is a deliberate choice by the author in order to make a point. This is where we have articulated our main arguments about the problem of unity. We have proposed that we could understand each half of the dialogue serving its purpose in articulating or referring to one particular principle that could potentially unite the dialogue. Our thesis has been the following: soul-leading by means of rhetoric and myth is the notion that ties both halves of the dialogue together. In the following chapter we have elaborated on that very subject.

The next and final chapter has been where we have investigated our thesis statement in detail. Our argument has suggested that the unity within *Phaedrus* could be established if we take soul-leading practiced through rhetorical arts and mythic narratives as the common theme of both halves of the dialogue. According to this view, the second half of the dialogue where rhetoric has been the dominant subject matter is where Socrates delivers certain items of advice on the skillful practice of soul-leading, which he puts into practice in the first half to a certain extent. The first half of the dialogue, on the other hand, is where the three speeches on love are performed. Essentially, the guidelines provided in the second half of *Phaedrus* might serve as blueprints for the skillful practice of soul-leading, and the first half represents three cases in which those have been put into consideration to a varying success. In other words, the first half could be understood as the case studies for the practice as it is described in the second half of the dialogue. Following that logic, we have pressed on with our argument in two major sections. In the first section we have laid out the aforementioned skills utilized in the practice of soul-leading. We have argued that there are three of them in *Phaedrus*: the orator should know his/her subject matter, he/she should be aware of the fundamental characteristics and perhaps the psychological state of his/her interlocutor. Finally, he/she must be aware to provide the speech with an organic structure that allows the speech to adapt in the face of ever-changing conditions of spoken dialogue. The next part of the discussion has taken these and attempted to see if the first two speeches on love seemed to have followed their advice. What we have seen in both speeches that they have failed to assess the

personality and psychological needs of the person they have addressed. In addition to that, they haven't seemed to be all that knowledgeable on the topic of *Eros*. In the next part of this chapter, we have examined the palinode and suggested that the presences of the mythic narrative have been the key to its relative skillfulness. Firstly, the myth has been the proper means to articulate an orator's thoughts and ideas where the language of reason and the rational argumentation cannot quite do the job. The rich and fanciful language of the myth could please the audience, which could make it easier for the rhetorician to persuade his/her audience. In the case of Socrates however the use of myth constituted a certain problem. We have argued that one of the skills a budding rhetorician should have is a certain grasp on the truth of the subject matter. Remembering the hierarchy of the souls, where the philosopher occupied the top position whereas the poet resided on the sixth, the poet's ability to articulate the truth of *Eros* has been rather limited. We suggested that this state of affairs bothered Socrates, yet he persevered since it has been better than the sophist's practice which allowed him almost no grasp on truth. In any case that has been all that he could, since Phaedrus' psychological state and capabilities could only allow him to use similes and fantastic tales. Whatever its faults are, Socrates could even hope that the mythic story might have inspired Phaedrus to develop an understanding of what kind of a soul he possessed, and might have introduced him to the bliss that awaited those who pursue their love for wisdom.

Finally, we should state that our efforts to find some sort of unity between the two halves of *Phaedrus* is simply an humble attempt to contribute to the vast range of discussions on the problem. Although many observations demonstrated in the previous section make good cases, we would also like to come up with our own take on the matter. Granted, *Phaedrus* has been quite an intricate piece of writing that has kept resisting my attempts at capsulating it within a few essential items of discussion. One feels that each attempt to reduce *Phaedrus* into a few formal or thematic principles always runs the risk of excluding some critical part of the dialogue or even missing the point completely. Having said that, *Phaedrus* is also a dialogue that possesses a great thematic richness. The sheer variety of different approaches to interpretation the dialogue welcomes has allowed me to argue that what unites the two halves of the

dialogue is indeed the notion of skillfully practiced soul-leading by means of rhetoric and myth. Certain parallelisms and similarities have made it possible for me to establish a connection between the two halves of the dialogue. In the first half, there are three speeches on the nature of love: these speeches employ a variety of methods and approaches to get their message across. The relative success or the skillfulness demonstrated within them is put into question within the dialogue. Following that we are presented with certain ideas about rhetoric as the art of persuasion and the ways to practice it with skill. As we go through the advisory points Socrates makes throughout this second half of the dialogue, we get the impression that those points could have some relevance in reevaluating the speeches in the previous half. One would like to believe that it is not a hasty conclusion to draw to argue that the points made in the second half on rhetoric could be used to give an account for the skillfulness of the previous speeches in question. Therefore, we come to an understanding that we could reconsider each half of the dialogue and attribute a certain function to them, which in turn could argue for their interaction. The resulting discussion considers the second half of the dialogue as primarily containing certain guidelines on the artful practice of rhetoric, whereas the first half can be understood as the three cases on which those points are put into practice with a varying degree of success. The resulting idea that we can take out from such a viewpoint are similar to the efforts that have been put forward in the past: it is merely an attempt to devise an interpretation that would provide the reader with a new perspective in approaching this delightfully rich piece of Platonic philosophy.

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APPENDICES

A: TURKISH SUMMARY/ TÜRKÇE ÖZET

Phaidros diyaloğunun Platonik felsefe bağlamında özel bir yeri olduğu söylenebilir. Herşeyden önce, Platon'un metinlerine aşina bir okuyucu fark edecektir ki, diyalog Platon'un diğer eserlerinde benzerlerine pek rastlayamayacağınız türden kimi tuhaflıklar barındırmaktadır. Öncelikle, metin tematik olarak neredeyse tam ortadan ikiye ayrılmış gibidir. Diyaloğun ilk yarısında ele alınan konularla, ikinci yarısında ele alınan meseleler arasında açıkça görünür bağlantılar kurulmamıştır. İlk yarı tamamen aşkın ve Eros'un doğası üzerine yürütülen üç ayrı tartışmaya ayrılmışken, ikinci yarıda retorik sanatının kimi gerekliliklerinden bahsedildiğine şahit oluruz. Diyaloğun akışı içinde bile, iki tema arasındaki geçiş ani ve anlamlandırılması görece zordur. Buna ek olarak, diyaloğun okurlarını meraka sürükleyecek başka bir mesele daha vardır. Bahsi geçen ilk yarıda rasyonel argümanlarla inşa edilegelmiş olan tartışma bir anda büyük bir değişime uğrar ve yerini oldukça renkli ve yoğun bir mitik anlatıya bırakır. Mitik imgeler Platon'un metinlerinde daha önce hiç görülmemiş değildir. Buna ragmen, kendisini Platonik diyaloglarda daima aklın sesi olarak bildiğimiz Sokrates'in argümanı bırakıp düpedüz Homerik bir ozan gibi bir anlatı dillendirmeye girişmiş olması nesillerce okurların kafasını karıştırmıştır. Şu sorular sorulmuştur: Mitin bu diyalogda ne gibi bir işlevi vardır? Retoriğe dair yürütülen tartışmalarla ilgisi nasıl kurulabilir? Dahası, bu diyaloğun iki yarısını birleştirdiğini iddia edeceğimiz öğe ne olabilir? Bu konuda birçok farklı iddia ortaya atılmıştır. Kimileri diyaloğu birleştiren öğenin retorik olduğunu iddia etmiştir. Belli bir bakış açısı da *Eros* fikrinin görmezden gelinemeyecek varlığını dikkate alarak bu görevi *Eros*'a yakıştırmışlardır. Bunlara ek olarak, metinde formel veyahut yapısal kimi paralellikler ve benzerlik gözlemleyerek, metnin bütünlüğünün bu öğeler üzerinden sağlanabileceğini iddia eden Platon okurları da olmuştur. Bunların yanı sıra, belki de en şaşırtıcı olanları ise, diyaloğun bir bütünlük problem taşımadığını iddia eden bakış açısıdır. İlerleyen sayfalarda göreceğimiz üzere,

her biri oldukça isabetli gözlemlerde ve spekülasyonlarda bulunmuştur. Bu tezde amaçladığımız, bu okurların saptamalarından faydalanarak, metnin anlaşılmasında bir nebze yardımcı olacağı umulan alternative bir bakış açısı ortaya koymaktır. Bu sebeple tartışmanın ilk aşaması olarak metnin kısa bir analizini yapmak gerekecektir.

Phaidros birçok farklı temanın, metinsel yapının ve üslubun içiçe geçmiş olduğu oldukça karmaşık bir metindir. Bu sebeple, şu iddia edilebilir ki, metne dair yürütülen her tartışma diyaloğun barındırdığı kimi detayların ve inceliklerin gözden kaçmasına ve kaybolmasına sebep olacaktır. Diyalog farklı bakış açılarıyla kendisine yaklaşan okurlara sunabileceği birçok farklı öğeyle doludur. Bizim bu tezde yürüteceğimiz tartışma söz konusu olduğunda ise, metne yaklaşımımızı belirli bazı öğelerle sınırlamak zorundayız. Aksi takdirde tartışmanın odağını kaçırma riskiyle karşı karşıya kalırız. Bütün bu düşünceler çerçevesinde çerçevesinde *Phaidros*'a baktığımızda en çok göze çarpan özelliğinin tematik olarak ikiye ayrılmış olması olduğunu fark ederiz. Diyaloğun ilk yarısı aşk ve *Eros* hakkında yürütülen üç adet tartışmadan oluşmaktadır. Bu tartışmaların ilkinde, Sokrates'in diyalog boyunca tek eşlikçisi olan genç Phaidros, hatip Lysias'a ait bir metni Sokrates'e okumaktadır. Metin en temelde aşkı kötücül bir mevhum olarak tasarlamakta, aşık kimseleri bir nevi baş belası olmakla suçlamaktadır. Lysias, konuşmasında bununla yetinmez, aynı zamanda Phaidros gibi genç ve güzel bir delikanlının bedenini ve başka değerli varlıklarını kendisine aşık bir kimseye değil de kendisine aşık olmayan, mesafeli kalmayı başaran bir kimseye emanet etmesi gerektiğini iddia etmektedir. Belli ki, Phadiros bu konuşmaya hayran kalmıştır. Gelgelelim, Sokrates'in tavrı belirgin bir şekilde farklıdır. Argümanların yapısı açısından baktığında, Lysias'ın bu konuşması oldukça zayıf kalmaktadır. Bu eleştiri üzerine Phaidros Sokrates'ten benzeri minvalde ve öncesine nazaran çok daha yetkin yeni bir konuşma yapmasını ister. Genç eşlikçisinin dileğini yerine getirmeye girişen Sokrates, bu ikinci konuşmada konuyu Lysias'ın üslubu ve yaklaşımını anımsatan bir şekilde yeniden ele alır. Bu sefer aşk bir deliliğe benzetilmektedir. Aşık kimse hastadır ve hastaların kendilerini zorlayan, kendilerine direnen öğeleri reddetmeleri durumunda olduğu gibi, aşıklar da kendilerine zorluk çıkaran, onlara direnen sevgilileri istemezler. Bu sebeple sevgililerinin gelişimini, yeşerip kuvvetlenmelerini engellemeye çalışırlar. Aşk

hastalığının efsunu ortadan kalkıp, aşığın aklı başına geldiğinde, sevgilisini terkedecektir. Geride kalan sevgiliye düşen ise, ilişki süresinde gördüğü muamelenin etkisiyle körelmiş yetileri ve zayıflamış karakteriyle başbaşa kalmaktır. Sokrates bu noktada bir itirafta bulunmak zorunda kalır. Lysias ve kendisi aşk hakkında böyle ileri geri konuşarak tanrı Eros'a büyük kötülük etmektedirler. Oysa Eros büyük ve iyi bir tanrıdır ve onun adını sohbetlerle, muhabbetle yüceltmek gerekir. Öyleyse, Sokrates yepyeni bir konuşma yapacak ve bu sefer Eros'a hakını verecektir. Değişiklikler bununla da kalmayacaktır. Aşk hakkındaki bu üçüncü ve son konuşmada Sokrates üslubunu tamamen değiştirerek aşk ve *Eros*'un doğasını Phaidros'a mitik bir hikâye yoluyla genç anlatmaya koyulur. Bu hikâyede bir zamanlar göklerde tanrılarla birlikte hakikati tavaf ederken, sahip oldukları kusurlar sebebiyle kendilerini yaralanmış ve "kanatlarını" kaybetmiş bir şekilde, bir beden içinde bulan ruhların hikayesi anlatılmaktadır. Ruhlar tanrılarla yaşadıkları geçmişlerinde hakikate ne kadar çok tanıklık edebilmişlerse, dünyaya indiklerinde hayatta kendilerini bulacakları koşullar da ona göre şekillenir. Hakikate en çok tanıklık edebilmiş bir ruh kendini bu dünyada bir filozof olarak bulur. Oysa hakikatten payını alamamış ruhun kaderinde belki de bir sofist ya da bir tiran olmak vardır. Bununla birlikte ruhlar kaderlerinin mahkumu değillerdir. Onlara verilen bu şans ise aşktır. Aşığın sevgilisinin yüzünde gördüğü güzellik ona hakikatin güzelliğini hatırlatacak, bu sayede ruhunda yükselme, yeniden tanrılar arasına karışma isteğini doğuracaktır. Bu uzun ve renkli hikayeyle Sokrates'in Phaidros'u aşk mevhumunu kullanarak felsefe yoluna çekmeye, yani bir nevi onun ruhuna rehberlik etmeye çalıştığı söylenebilir. İlk yarının ardından gelen ikinci bölümün içeriği retorik sanatı çerçevesinde dile getirilen bir dizi tartışma olarak özetlenebilir. Elbette bu noktada şunu tekrar ifade etmek gerekir ki, ikinci bölümde yer alan bütün öğelerin bizim tezimizin iddiasına katkıda bulunduğunu idda etmek zordur. Bu sebeple, tartışmamızı yürütürken iddiamıza temel sağlayacak ve diyaloğun akışı boyunca ağırlığı en yoğun olarak hissedilen öğelerden bahsedeceğiz. Bu durumda, diyaloğun ikinci yarısının Sokrates'in ruha rehberlik etmek amacıyla retorik sanatının nasıl kullanılması gerektiğinden bahsettiği kısım olarak değerlendirilmesinin mümkün olduğu söylenebilir. Sokrates bu bölümde, kişinin ruhunun yönlendirilmesi, ona rehberlik edilmesi adına bir hatibin sahip olmasının faydalı olacağı kimi

becerilerden bahsetmektedir. Tezimizde üç adet olarak tasarlamış olduğumuz bu becerilerin ilki hatibin ele aldığı konunun hakikatini bilmesini gerektirmektedir. İkinci beceri bahsi geçen konuşmacıdan karşısına aldığı kişinin ne türden bir ruh taşıdığının farkına varmasını beklemektedir. Üçüncü beceri ise hatibin "canlı", yani sohbetin, diyaloğun değişen koşullarına ayak uydurabilecek bir hitap geliştirebilme hünerinde saklıdır. Tartışmanın bu noktasında bizim iddiamız şudur: *Phaidros*'un bütünlüğü bu gözlemler ve "ruha rehberlik" fikri çerçevesinde inşa edilebilir. Diyaloğun ikinci yarısı ruha nasıl yol gösterilebileceğine dair kimi fikirler geliştirirken, diyaloğun ilk yarısı bu fikirlerin uygulamaya döküldüğü bir dizi vaka olarak okunabilir.

Phaidros'un hangi öğeler çerçevesinde ele alındığında bir bütünlük taşıyabileceğini araştırmaya koyulan çeşitli Platon okurları, yaptıkları gözlemler çerçevesinde kimi yorumlara ulaşmışlardır. Bahsi geçen yaklaşımların ve yorumların oldukça etkili ve anlaşılır bir özetini ortaya koymuş olan Daniel Werner'in konu hakkındaki "Plato's Phaedrus and the Problem of Unity" (Platon'un *Phaidros* Diyaloğu ve Bütünlük problemi) adlı makalesine bu noktada başvurmak faydalı olacaktır. Werner'in çalışmasında da gözlemleyebileceğimiz üzere, *Phaidros*'un bir bütünlük taşıyıp taşımadığına dair yürütülen tartışmalar belirli birkaç başlık altında toplanmaktadır. Bunlardan ilki diyaloğun, metnin tamamında varlığını hissettiren, bir tek ana konuya sahip olduğunu ve metnin bütünlüğünün bu ana konu veyahut tema çerçevesinde anlaşılabileceğini iddia etmektedir. Bu başlık altında retorik ve *Eros*'un *Phaidros*'un ana teması olmak konusunda en güçlü adaylar olduğunu ifade etmek lazımdır. Bütünlük problemine getirilen ikinci çözüm ise, diyaloğun iki yarısını birleştirdiği varsayılan öğenin konuda değil, kimi formel veya dramatik niteliklerde aranması gerektiğini iddia etmektedir. Üçünücü görüş radikal sayılabilecek bir yol izleyerek, *Phaidros*'un bir bütünlük problemi taşımadığı iddiasını ortaya sürmektedir. Bu bakış açısına göre, birçoklarının peşinde koştuğu tematik bütünlük fikri çağımız okurunun estetik beklentilerinin bir ifadesidir. İddia edilen odur ki, Platon'un çağdaşlarının ve onu takip eden Yeni-Platoncu geleneğin estetik beklentileri sözkonusu olduğunda metin zaten dramatik bir bütünlük taşımaktadır. Son olarak Werner, biz Platon okurlarına dördüncü bir seçenek önermekte ve *Phaidros* okurlarının tecrübe ettiği bütünsüzlük izleniminin filozof açısından stratejik bir değeri olduğunu iddia

etmektedir. Bizim bu tezde ortaya koymaya çalıştığımız çözümün bu bakış açısına belli bir yakınlıkta konumlanmış olduğunu şu noktada ifade etmemiz gerekir.

Phaidros'un bütünlüğü meselesine getirilen yorumlara detaylıca bakmaya başlamadan önce şu soruyu sormakta fayda vardır: Biz okurlar olarak neden bu metinde bir bütünlük arıyoruz? Bunun temelde birkaç sebebi olduğu söylenebilir. Öncelikle hepimiz elimize bir Platon metni aldığımızda biliriz ki, bu bir felsefe metnidir. Buradan yola çıkarak Platon'un elinden çıkmış bir metnin belli bir konu ya da gündem çerçevesinde ele alındığını var sayarız. Diyaloğun en başında Sokrates'in Phaidros'a sorduğu "Nereden gelir, nereye gidersin?" sorusunun bile diyaloğun belli bir doğrultuyu izleyerek bir yere varmak istediğini okura düşündürdüğünü iddia etmek mümkündür. Dahası, bizzat diyaloğun kendisi bizlere ister yazılı ister sözlü olsun, her türlü konuşmanın veya metnin organik bir bütünlük taşıması gerektiğini salık vermektedir. Bu durum karşısında, bir okurun *Phaidros*'ta bir çeşit bütünlük aramaya kalkışması anlaşılır bir eylem olacaktır. Ne var ki, bu bütünlüğün nerede aranması gerektiğine dair tartışmalar bu noktada bizi daha çok ilgilendirmektedir. Öncelikle *Phaidros* için bütünlük mevhumunun bir sorun teşkil etmediğini düşünen görüşü değerlendirelim. Malcolm Heath'in oldukça keskin kimi gözlemlerle ortaya koyduğu bu bakış açısı, bütün metni anlamlı kılması beklenen tek bir tema arayışının çağdaş Platon okuyucusuna has bir beklenti olduğunu öne sürmektedir. Heath'in görüşüne göre Platon'un çağdaşları ile ilerleyen dönemlerde onu takip eden kimi filozofların söylemleri esas alındığında, metnin zaten bir bütünlük beslediği düşüncesi ortaya çıkmaktadır. Nihayetinde, *Phaidros* derli toplu bir dramatik yapı ihtiva etmektedir. Heath'e göre antik dünyanın okurları için bu nitelik bir metni bütünlüklü kılmak için yeterli bulunmaktaydı.

Gerçekten de *Phaidros* diyaloğunun bir ana tema yoluyla bir bütün haline geldiğini iddia eden Platon okurları iki farklı seçenek konusunda ayrılığa düşmüş gibi görünmektedirler. Bu seçeneklerden ilki retorik, ikincisi ise *Eros*'tur. Retoriğin bir konu olarak diyalogda meşgul ettiği alan yadsınamaz. Öncelikle, diyaloğun ilk yarısındaki ilk iki konuşma retoriğin yöntemlerini ve yaklaşımını hatırlatacak bir şekilde yürütülmektedir. Buna ek olarak, diyaloğun ikinci yarısı neredeyse tamamen

retoriğin ne işlev gördüğü ve nasıl beceriyle icra edilebileceğine dair tartışmalarla geçmektedir. Bu durumda birçok Platon okurunun *Phaidros* söz konusu olduğunda, diyaloğun ana konusu olarak retoriği ele almalarında bir haklılık payı olduğunu söyleyebiliriz. Buna karşın, bu görüşün açıklayamadığı bir nokta vardır. *Eros* ve ona eşlik eden mitik anlatı diyaloğun neredeyse tam ortasında durmaktadır ve retoriğin ana konu olduğuna dair öne sürülen iddiaların bunu nasıl açıklayabileceği belli değildir. Benzeri bir şekilde, *Eros*'u başat tema olarak ele alan görüş retoriğin diyaloğu boydan boya saran varlığına bir açıklık getirmelidir. Elbette, *Phaidros*'ta bir bütünlük bulma çabalarının dayandığı tek unsur ana konu mevhumu değildir. Diyaloğun kimi yapısal veya dramatik öğeler sayesinde bir bütünlük kazandığını iddia eden kimi görüşler de mevcuttur. Örneğin, *Phaidros* yalnızca bir edebi eser olarak ele alınacak olursa metnin gayet belirgin bir şekilde bir bütünlük taşımakta olduğu görülecektir. Diyaloğun başat dramatik unsurları tutarlı bir biçimde metin boyunca varlıklarını muhafaza etmektedirler. Diyalog iki kişiyle başlayıp, iki kişiyle bitmektedir. Olay örgüsü bizleri kesintisiz bir şekilde Atina şehrinin surlarından alıp, şehri çevreleyen kırsalda bir ağaç altına götürür. Bütün olup bitenler aynı gün içinde gerçekleşmektedir. Metin boyunca karakter, yer, zaman ve olay örgüsü konularında ortaya konan tutarlılık diyaloğa belli anlamda bir bütünlük kazandırmaktadır. Dahası, *Phaidros*'un formel anlamda bir bütünlük taşıdığı söylenebilir. Örneğin, diyalog boyunca ortaya konan her iddia, bir sonraki pasajda belli bir açıdan kusurlu bulunmakta, fakat aynı zamanda konuşmacılar tarafından geliştirilmektedir. Werner'in iddiası *Phaidros*'un birbirinin üzerine eklenerek, giderek hakikate yaklaşmak yolunda mesafe alan bir argümanlar dizisi olarak görülebileceği yönündedir.

Son olarak Platon'un *Phaidros*'u bu şekilde düzenlemekle bir noktaya parmak basmaya çalıştığı iddiasından bahsetmek gerekecektir. Werner bu noktada iki farklı yanıt geliştirmekte, fakat birini diğerine tercih etmemektedir. Öncelikle, Platon'un metni ikiye bölerek diyalog boyunca ortaya konmakta olan delilik-felsefe ayrımını vurgulamaya çalıştığı söylenebilir. Buna ek olarak, bu ayrıksılık aslında diyalog hakkında bir meta-yorum olarak da okunabilir. Yani diyaloğun her bir parçasının temsil ettiği öğeler biz okurlara felsefe pratiğine yaptıkları katkıların sınırı çerçevesinde sunulmaktadır. Bizim bu tezdeki iddiamız, diyalogdaki temel ayrımın

belli bir felsefi fikrin ortaya konması konusunda yardımcı olabileceği yönündedir. Tezimizin temel iddiası şu yöndedir: *Phaidros* diyaloğuna bir bütünlük kazandıran öğe ruha ikna yoluyla rehberlik etme pratiğidir. *Phaidros* en temelde ruhun beceriyle icra edilen retorik yoluyla nasıl yönlendirilebileceği üzerine yazılmış bir metin olarak okunabilir. Bu fikrin geliştirilmesinde diyaloğun iki yarısı kendi rolünü oynamaktadır. Bu bağlam içinde, *Phaidros*'un ikinci yarısında ruhu ikna edip, felsefenin yoluna götürebilecek bir retorik pratiğinin hangi noktalara dikkat etmesi gerektiği tartışılmaktadır. İlk bölümde ise, biz okurlara bu noktalara dikkat edilmediğinde ortaya çıkan tartışmanın kusurları ile, beceriyle icra edilmiş retorik pratiğinin Phaidros gibi bir birey karşısında alacağı şeklin bir ifadesi sunulmaktadır. Bu düşüncemizi geliştirmek adına, diyaloğun her bir yarısının bu fikri nasıl destekleyebileceğini göstermeye koyulmalıyız.

Phaidros'un ikinci yarısı en temelde ruhun retorik pratikleri yoluyla iknası konusunda Sokrates'in tanımladığı kimi esasların tartışıldığı bölüm olarak kavranabilir. Diyaloğun bu kısmı boyunca Sokrates, ruhun retorik yoluyla iknası veya yönlendirilmesi konusunda oldukça detaylı bir şekilde konuşmakta ve temelde retoriğin veya diğer adıyla hitabet sanatının beceriyle ve başarıyla icra edilmesi için gerekli gördüğü kimi unsurları sıralamaktadır. Bunları Sokrates'in çiçeği burnunda bir hatibe verdiği nasihatler olarak da değerlendirebiliriz, zira metnin kimi yerlerinde bizzat filozof bu tavrı göstermektedir. Herşeyden önce şunu ifade etmek gerekir ki, hitabet bir sanattır ve her sanattan beklenebileceği üzere bir ustalığı vardır. Retoriğin veya hatipliğin en temel kullanımı ise ruha yön vermektir. Sokrates bu bağlamda bize temel bir ayrımdan bahseder. Görünüşe göre bir filozofun retoriği icra edişi ile, Lysias gibi bir sofistin retoriği icra edişi arasında en temelde bir fark yatmaktadır. Sokrates'in kavrayışına göre, sofist insanları yönlendirmek ve onları argümanlarla ikna etmekteki becersini kamusal ve politik arenada kendisine kazanç ve mevki sağlamak için kullanmaktadır. Oysa, filozofun ortaya koyduğu haliyle retorik hatibin karşısına koyduğu kimseyi felsefenin yoluna doğru çekebilme amacını taşımaktadır. Sokrates, niyeti filozofça bir hitabet sergilemek olan bir retorikçinin sahip olmaktan büyük fayda göreceği becerileri şöyle sıralamaktadır. Bir hatip herşeyden önce hakkında konuştuğu meselenin hakikatine vakıf olmalıdır. *Phaidros*'un içeriğine bu noktada geri dönelim.

Diyaloğun ilk yarısındaki konuşmalarda hâkim mesele Eros ve aşkın doğasıdır. Üç konuşmada da birileri genç Phaidros'u aşkın niteliği konusunda ikna etmeye çalışmaktadır. İlkinde bu kişi sofist Lysias iken, diğer iki konuşmada Sokrates karşısındaki gencin ruhuna ulaşıp onu ikna etmeye çalışıyor gibi görünmektedir. Phaidros'un aklını çelmeye çalıştıkları bu konuşmalarda iki konuşmacı da aşk konusundaki bilgilerini Phaidros üzerinde hakimiyet kazanmak amacıyla kullanmaktadırlar. İleride de bahsedeceğimiz üzere, diyalog Lysias ve Sokrates'in ilk konuşmasının sergilediği başarısızlığı temel meseleleri olan *Eros* konusundaki bilgisizliklerine yoruyor gibi görünmektedir. Sokrates'in genç hatiplerden beklediği ikinci ustalık ise karşılarına koydukları ruhun akli ve duygusal ihtiyaçlarını doğru bir şekilde tanımalarından geçmektedir. Sokrates bu konuda retorikçiden insanların arasına karışmasını ve tek tek bireylerle diyaloğa girmesini beklemektedir. Farklı insanların farklı öğelerden etkilenip, farklı şekillerde direnç gösterdiğine ve etkinlik kuvvetlerinin değişkenliğine tanık olan retorikçi, insanların ruhlarını bu ve benzeri esaslar üzerinden gruplandırma yetisi gösterecektir. Yani, genç hatip tanıdığı ruhlardan yola çıkarak ruhları sınıflandırmayı öğrenecek; bu yolla kazandığı tecrübe ve bilgiyi bir sonraki karşılaşmasında kullanmaya hazır olacaktır. Sokrates genç hatibin şu sonuca ulaşmasını bekler gibidir: Kimi ruhlar basittir, kimisi de karmaşıktır. Karşısındaki tekil ruhun ne türden bir karakter gösterdiğini anlayabilen hatip, o ruha hitap edecek anlatıyı geliştirme yetisi gösterebilecektir. Sokrates'in son tavsiyesi hatipten konuşmasına belli bir canlılık katmasını beklemektedir. Retorikçi hitabesini öyle tasarlamalıdır ki, akıp gitmekte olan diyaloğun yaşayacağı anlık değişikliklere ayak uydurabilsin. Bu noktada diyaloğun ikinci yarısını geride bırakıp, ilk yarısına dönersek, aşk üzerine yürütülen tartışmalar sürecinde tanık olduğumuz ilk iki konuşmanın yukarıda sıraladığımız becerilerden yoksun kaldıklarını görürüz. Öncelikle Lysias'ın hitabesine bakalım. Diyalogda açıkça ortaya konduğu üzere, Lysias'ın metni temelde tek bir ana fikrin farklı biçimlerde tekrarlanarak dile getirilmesinden ibarettir. Argümanların organizasyonunda doğal bir düzen görmek mümkün değildir, zira hitabenin ne başı ne de sonu bellidir. Bu noktalardan oldukça şikayetçi olan Sokrates'in geliştirdiği tartışma ise argüman yapısında görece başarılı olmakla birlikte, Lysias'ın metniyle aynı temel hataya düşmüştür. İki konuşma da

aşktan ve *Eros*'tan kötücül bir olgu olarak bahsetmektedir ve Sokrates bunu tahammül edilemez bulur. Yani, diyaloğun bu noktasında, filozof genç Phaidros'un ruhuna hitap etmek konusunda belli bir biçimde başarısız olmuş sayılabilir. Konuşmalar organik bir bütünlüğe sahip olamamış ve dahası, ele aldıkları konunun hakikatini kavramakta başarısız olmuşlardır. Peki, bu noktada *Eros* hakkındaki üçüncü ve son konuşmanın başarılı olduğu yönünde bir iddia ortaya atarsak, bunu nasıl savunuruz?

Üçüncü konuşma Phaidros'u etkilemek konusunda diğerlerine kıyasla çok daha başarılı olmuştur, zira Sokrates'in hitabesi sona erdiğinde Phaidros bunun diğerlerine kıyasla en çok beğendiği konuşma olduğunu ifade eder. Diyaloğun geri kalanında aşk konusu bu şekilde bir daha ele alınmadığı için, en azından diyaloğun gündemi söz konusu olduğunda bu hitabenin yeterli sayılabileceğini iddia edebiliriz. Buna rağmen bu konuşmanın diğerlerine nasıl üstün geldiği konusunda bir açıklama getirmemiz gerekir. İddiamız şudur ki, üçüncü konuşma ve onun barındırdığı mitik anlatı Sokrates'in retoriği ikinci yarıda bahsettiği yetilere uygun bir şekilde icra edişinin ifadesidir. Bu iddiamızı desteklemek adına önce bir karakter olarak Phaidros'u incelemeliyiz. Phaidros döneminin Atinalısı için oldukça tanınmış, hatta belli bir kötü üne sahip bir kişiliktir. Atina'nın tanrılarına saygısızlık etmek suçlamasıyla şehirden kovulmuş olan Phaidros, bu diyalogda belli bir insan fikrini temsil etmektedir. Hatırlanacağı üzere, diyaloğun ilk yarısındaki üçüncü konuşmada yer alan mitik hikâyede tanrıların ve insanların ruhları kanatlı bir at arabacısı olarak canlandırılmıştır. Tanrılar ve insanlar için de ruhların arabasını çeken iki adet at vardır. Tanrıların ruhları söz konusu olduğunda bu iki at da erdemli, uysal ve duygularına hakimken, insanların atları zıt karakterler taşır. Birisinin uysallığına diğerinin saldırganlığı, disiplinsizliği ve kontrolsüz şehveti eşlik etmektedir. Diyalogda Phaidros tam da ruhunda bu iki zıt dürtünün çekişmesini tecrübe eden bir birey olarak tasarlanmıştır. Hem aşka şehvete düşkündür hem de felsefeden konuşmaya, öğrenemeye heveslenmektedir. Ruhunda hem kurnaz bir sofistin hem de bir filozofun dokunabileceği bir cevher vardır. Bu sayede hem bir sofistin müdahalesi altında kalmakta, hem de bir filozofun ilham veren sözlerinden etkilenmektedir. Belki de Phaidros'un bizleri temsil ettiği bile söylenebilir. Her halükârda, Sokrates'in üçüncü konuşması Phaidros'u tekil bir ruh olarak iyi kavramış olduğunu ifade ediyor gibidir. Herşeyden önce, Sokrates bir hatip

olarak kıvraklık göstermiş ve konuşmanın formunu sofistlerin kuru argümanlarından uzaklaştırıp, mitik imgelerle renklendirmiştir. Belli ki, Phaidros gibi bir ruhu en çok heyecanlandıran ve eğlendiren edebi form budur. Dahası, *Eros*'tan bahsetmek konusundaki ısrarcılığıyla Sokrates, Phaidros gibi birinin ilgisini çekecek türden bir konuya parmak basmış olduğunun bilincindedir. Belki de hepsinden daha önemlisi, Sokrates bir hatip olarak yeteneğini Phaidros'a Platon'un metinlerinde benzerini pek bulamadığımız türden renkli ve etkileyici bir mitik anlatı sunarak, onu hakikate gideceğini umduğu yola doğru yönelendirmeye çalışmaktadır. Aşk, der Sokrates, karmaşık ruhlara hakikatin tanrısal güzelliğini hatırlatarak onlara yükselmek için bir şans verir. Sevgilisinin yüzünde güzelliği gören ruh, aslında hakikatin güzelliğine tanık olduğu anlarını tekrardan hatırlamaktadır. Ruhunda filozof kumaşı olan kimseler için bu yükseliş daha kolay bile olabilir. Lakin, Phaidros'un ruhların sıralamasında filozofa yakın durduğu söylenemez. En nihayetinde Phaidros basit ve duru bir ruh değildir. Lysias gibi bir sofistin bile onun aklını ne kadar kolay çelebildiği düşünüldüğünde, *Eros*'a dair bu masal Sokrates'in elindeki en kuvvetli araç halini almıştır. Böylelikle metnin bütünlüğü inşa edilmiş olur. Sokrates temel esaslarını verdiği filozofça icra edilen bir retorik pratiğinin örneğini aynı diyalog içinde biz okurlarına sunmaktadır. Diyaloğun ikinci yarısı bizlere ruha yön verilmesi konusunda bir şablon sunarken, diyaloğun ilk yarısı bu şablonu bize uygulamalar çerçevesinde örneklemektedir.

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